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FROM

Dr. George C. Shattuck



LETTERS AND ESSAYS.

LETTERS AND ESSAYS

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

BY RICHARD SHARP.

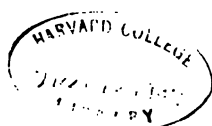


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PREFACE.

The author of the following pages hopes to be excused for telling the reader that they were written during a few short intervals of leisure, which he has employed rather in deriving instruction and amusement from the works of others, than in attempting to afford either by his own.

Several of his Letters have been published without his knowledge: he has thought it best to print a few others, both in prose and verse.

Being, of course, in the possession of his friends, they might (however insignificant) appear hereafter, when he could no longer correct them; and the dates of some will show that he has no time to lose.

“Vesper * * admonuit.”

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LETTERS AND ESSAYS.

TO THE REV. JOHN FELL.

London, 2d February, 1784.

You will receive, in this and another frank, my preface to your Grammar, which I hope you will approve. If you do so, pray be good enough to return it by the coach; for the book itself is already printed; and, as you well know, by sad experience, the devil is a most importunate dun.

The sentiments I am sure you will not dislike; but I am far from satisfied with the expression, and I must beg you to have no mercy.

Our common object is to do the best we can towards preventing the style of the next race of authors from being tainted by the pedantry of the present. Indeed, Johnsonism is now become almost a general disease.

In the lighter kinds of writing this affectation is particularly disagreeable; and I am convinced that in the gravest, aye! and in the sublimest passages, the simple

terms and the idioms of our language often add a grace beyond the reach of scholarship, increasing, rather than diminishing, the elegance, as well as the spirit of the diction.

"*Utinam et verba in usu quotidiano posita minùs timeremus.*"

"He that would write well," says Roger Ascham, "must follow the advice of Aristotle, to speak as the common people speak, and to think as the wise think."

In support of this opinion many of the examples cited by you are amusing, as well as convincing. The following from a great author may be added—

"Is there a God to swear by, and is there none to believe in, none to trust to?"

What becomes of the force and simplicity of this short sentence, when turned into the clumsy English which schoolmasters indite and which little boys can construe? "Is there a God by whom to swear, and is there none in whom to believe, none to whom to pray?"

The doctor is a great writer and is deservedly admired, but he should not be imitated. His gigantic strength may perhaps require a vocabulary that would encumber feeble thoughts: but it is very comical to see Mr. B. and Dr. P. strutting about in Johnson's bulky clothes; as if a couple of Lilliputians had bought their great coats at a rag-fair in Brobdignag.

Cowley, Dryden, Congreve, and Addison, are our best examples; for Middleton is not free from Gallicisms. Mr. Burke's speeches and pamphlets (although the style is too undisciplined for a model) abound with phrases in which homeliness sets off elegance, and ease adds grace to strength.

How your neighbour, the "*dilectus lapis*," will smile to hear Milton's practice appealed to ! Yet what can he say to the following specimens, taken at random while I am now writing ?

" Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
In every street ? Do they not say how well
Are come upon him his deserts ?"

" Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread."

" Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee—go with that."

" Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost."

" I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death."

" So ! farewell hope ; but with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse : all good to me is lost ;
Evil, be thou my good."

Shakespeare I need not quote, for he never writes ill, excepting when he means to be very fine, and very learned.

Fortunately our admirable translation of the Scriptures abounds with these native terms of expression, and it is

admitted to be almost as pure an authority for English as for doctrine.

I begin, already, to look forward to my annual week's holiday at Thaxted, where I shall hear you expound them for both purposes.

ON ENGLISH STYLE.*

During the last thirty or forty years, English literature has been enriched with many valuable compositions in prose and in verse. Many wise and learned men have made use of our language in communicating their sentiments concerning all the important branches of science and art. All kinds of subjects have been skilfully treated in it, and many works of taste and genius have been written with great and well-deserved success : yet perhaps it will appear, upon a careful view of these compositions, that whatsoever credit their authors are entitled to, for acuteness of understanding, strength of imagination, delicacy of taste, or energy of passion ; there are but few of them that deserve the praise of having expressed themselves in a pure and genuine strain of *English*. In general they have preferred such a choice, and such an arrangement of words, as an early acquaintance with some other language, and the neglected study of their own, would naturally incline them to. Sometimes also we find them expressing a mean opinion of their native tongue. This, however, I am the less inclined to wonder at, as I am convinced that those only can speak of our language without respect, who are ignorant of its nature and qualities. Perhaps it is as capable of receiving any

* Printed in 1784 as the preface to an "Essay on English Grammar."

impressions that a man of taste and genius may choose to stamp upon it, and is as easily moulded into all the various forms of passion, elegance, and sublimity, as any language, ancient or modern.

Some men of eminence in letters, having seen how well the fashionable world has succeeded in imitating the manners of the French, have endeavoured to raise themselves into reputation by importing their forms of speech; and, not contented with the good old English idiom, have dressed out their works in all the tawdriness of French phraseology.

But this injudicious fashion of adulterating our language with foreign mixtures, is more especially the case with respect to the Latin; to the laws of which, many of our writers, and indeed some also of our grammarians, have so strenuously endeavoured to subject our language, that Brown's prophecy, in the preface to his "Vulgar Errors," is at length come to pass, and "we are now forced to study Latin, in order to understand English." The complaint is not new, though the practice complained of is now become more frequent, and more extensive than ever. Our elegant and idiomatic satirist ridicules that

"——— easy Ciceronian style

So Latin, yet so English all the while."

POPE'S EPILOGUE TO SATIRES.

Not only Latin words, but Latin idioms, are now invading us with so much success, that, do what we can, I fear we must submit to the yoke, and as our country was formerly compelled to become a province of the Roman.

empire, so must our language sink at last into a dialect of the Roman tongue. This event has been much hastened of late years. Some men, whose writings do honour to their country and to mankind, have, it must be confessed, written in a style that no Englishman will own: a sort of anglicised Latin, and chiefly distinguished from it by a trifling difference of termination; yet so excellent are these works, in other respects, that a man might deserve well of the public who would take the trouble of translating them into English. As I do not notice these alterations in our language in order to commend them, I shall not produce any particular instances. I shall content myself with supporting the fact by the evidence of a truly respectable critic, now living. In the preface to his excellent dictionary, he says, "so far have I been from any care to grace my page with modern decorations, that I have studiously endeavoured to collect my examples and authorities from the writers before the Restoration, whose works I regard as the *wells of English undefiled*; as the pure sources of genuine diction. Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its ancient Teutonic character, and deviating towards a Gallic structure and phraseology; *from which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it*; by making our ancient volumes the groundwork of our style, admitting, among the additions of later times, only such as may supply real deficiencies; such as are readily adopted by the genius of our tongue, and incorporate easily with our native idioms."

In his preface to the works of Shakspeare, we also find the following very applicable sentiments: "I believe there is in every nation, a style that never becomes ob-

solete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered.

"The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hopes of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction *forsake the vulgar when the vulgar is right*; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where Shakspeare seems to have gathered his comic dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellences, deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language." These passages I have inserted, because such a testimony from this great man will at least be thought *impartial* by every person acquainted with the characteristics of his style.

The alterations in our language here mentioned, are certainly not for the better: they give the phraseology a disgusting air of study and formality; they have their source in affectation, not in taste; yet novelty has its attractions, and what Quintilian says of Seneca's works, may be fairly applied to our later English writers; "In eloquendo corrupta pleraque, et eo perniciosissima, quod abundebant *dulcibus vitiis*." Though these exotic terms and phrases are not really better than our home-bred English, yet their newness gives them a spurious sort of beauty; though they do not really enrich the dress of our thoughts, yet they are a kind of tinsel ornaments admired because they glitter and glare. The writers I allude to may perhaps have succeeded in giving our language a higher polish; but have they not also curtailed and im-

poverished it ? Perhaps they *may* have cleared it of some cant terms, low phrases, and awkward constructions ; but what they may have gained in accuracy, have they not lost in variety ? Have they not reduced all kinds of composition to an insipid uniformity ? Is not the spirit of our language lowered, its freedom cramped, and its range of expression narrowed ?

I shall not be required to prove this opinion by such of my readers as are acquainted with the works of Hooker, Taylor, Swift, Pope, Addison and Dryden ; with the prose of Cowley, and with Shakspeare's "immortal wit." However, the prevalence of fashion is so strong, that all resistance to this adulteration of our language may be ineffectual ; and it is well worthy of notice, that every polite nation, hitherto distinguished in literature, has, after a certain period, declined in taste and purity of composition. The later Greek writers are known by the diminutive term, "*Græculi*," and the Augustan age denotes an era before the Latin tongue was vitiated and spoiled by vain refinements and affected innovations. To prevent a similar decline of the French language, the French Academy has endeavoured to render it at once more pure and more durable : but the republic of letters is a true republic, in its disregard to the arbitrary decrees of usurped authority. Perhaps such an institution would do still less with us. Our critics are allowed to petition, but not to command : and why should their power be enlarged ? The laws of our speech, like the laws of our country, should breathe a spirit of liberty : they should check licentiousness, without restraining freedom. The most effectual method of preserving our language from decay, and preventing a total disregard to the Saxon part of it, is to change our present mode of education.

Children are generally taught the grammar of a foreign tongue before they understand that of their own ; or if they chance to be instructed in the principles of their native tongue, they learn them from some system that does little more than fetter it with the rules of construction drawn from another language. Dr. Lowth, in his preface, has taken notice of this circumstance.

“ A grammatical study of our own language makes no part of the ordinary method of instruction which we pass through in our childhood, and it is very seldom that we apply ourselves to it afterwards.

“ Yet the want of it will never be effectually supplied by any other advantages whatsoever. Much practice in the polite world, and a general acquaintance with the best authors, are good helps ; but alone will hardly be sufficient : we have writers who have enjoyed these advantages in their full extent, and yet cannot be recommended as models of an accurate style. Much less, then, will what is commonly called learning serve the purpose ; that is, a critical knowledge of ancient languages, and much reading of ancient authors. The greatest critic and most able grammarian of the last age was frequently at a loss in matters of ordinary use and common construction in his own vernacular idiom.”

The design of the following work is to teach the grammar of the *English* tongue ; not by arbitrary and capricious rules, and much less by such as are taken from the customs of other languages ; but by a methodical collection of observations, comprising all those current phrases and forms of speech, which are to be found in our best and most approved writers and speakers. It is certainly the business of a grammarian to find out, and not to

make, the laws of a language. In this work the author does not assume the character of a legislator, but appears as a faithful compiler of the scattered laws. He does not presume to regulate the customs and fashions of our speech, but only notes and collects them.

It matters not what causes these customs and fashions owe their birth to ; the moment they become general, they are laws of the language ; and a grammarian can only remonstrate, how much soever he disapprove. From his opinions and precepts an appeal may always be made to the tribunal of use, as to the supreme authority and last resort : in language, as in law, "*communis error facit jus*." By the general consent of a nation, certain sounds and certain written signs, together with their inflections and combinations, come to be used as denoting certain ideas and their relations ; and the man that chooses to deviate from the custom of his country in expressing his thoughts, is as ridiculous as though he were to walk the streets in a Spanish cloak, or a Roman toga. Perhaps he might say these garments are more elegant and more commodious than a suit of English broad cloth ; but I believe this excuse would hardly protect him from derision and disgrace.

Besides the principal purpose for which this little book was written (that of instructing youth), I hope the perusal of it may not be useless to those that are already acquainted with polite literature. Much reading and good company are supposed to be the best methods of getting at the niceties and elegances of a language ; but this road is long and irksome. It is certainly a safer and a readier way to sail by compass than to rove at random ; and any person who wished to become acquainted with

the various productions of nature, would do better to study the systems of our best naturalists, than to go wandering about from land to land, lighting here upon one, and there upon another, merely out of a desire to see them all. I hope also this book may be useful to those foreigners that wish to learn the English tongue; it being intended to contain all our most usual Anglicisms; all those phrases and peculiarities, which form the characteristics of our language. I will not take upon me to say that we have no grammar capable of teaching a foreigner to read our authors; but this I am sure of, that we have none by which he can be enabled to understand our conversation.

ADDITION, 1834.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. BURKE TO
MR. MURPHY.

“There is a style which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see farther advanced by the authority of a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude is, to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written, and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper (such I must think it) in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

“From this feigned manner, or falsetto, as I think the musicians call something of the same sort in singing, no

one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style ; but whatever success the attempt may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity, and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language. It is true, that when the exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make 'ambition virtue;' but the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. These portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common."

TO MR. HENDERSON.

London, 1785.

I went, as I promised, to see the new "HAMLET," whose provincial fame had excited your curiosity as well as mine.

There has not been such a first appearance since yours; yet nature, though she has been bountiful to him in figure and feature, has denied him voice—of course he could not exemplify his own direction for the players to "*speak the speech trippingly on the tongue*," and now and then he was as deliberate in his delivery as if he had been reading prayers, and had waited for the response.

He is a very handsome man, almost tall and almost large, with features of a sensible, but fixed and tragic cast—his action is graceful, though somewhat formal; which you will find it hard to believe, yet it is true. Very careful study appears in all he says and all he does; but there is more singularity and ingenuity, than simplicity and fire. Upon the whole, he strikes me rather as a finished French performer, than as a varied and vigorous English actor; and it is plain he will succeed better in heroic, than in natural and passionate tragedy. Excepting in serious parts, I suppose he will never put on the sock.

You have been so long without a "brother near the throne," that it will perhaps be serviceable to you to be obliged to bestir yourself in Hamlet, Macbeth, Lord

Townley, and Maskwell ; but in Lear, Richard, Falstaff, and Benedict, you have nothing to fear, notwithstanding the known fickleness of the public and its love of novelty.

I think I have heard you remark (what I have myself observed in the History of the Stage,) that periodical changes have taken place in the taste of the audience, or at least in the manner of the great performers. Sometimes the natural and spirited mode has prevailed, and then the dignified and declamatory. Betterton, eminent both in comedy and tragedy, appears to have been an instance of the first. Then came Booth and Quin, who were admired for the last. Garrick followed, restoring or re-inventing the best manner, which you have also adopted so fortunately and successfully. Mr. Kemble will be compelled, by the hoarse monotony of his voice, to rely upon the conventional stateliness that distinguished Garrick's predecessors, which is now carried to inimitable perfection by his accomplished sister.

You see that I have been much amused by this town-made incident, a first-appearance ; but, believe me, I had much rather have been angling with you at Marlow, even though without a bite. I had rather laugh at your "quips and cranks," than hook the largest perch in the Thames.

TO THE REV. JOHN FELL.

January 1, 1788.

My cold, my obstinate cold, has been so exasperated by some Christmas indiscretions, as to be malicious enough to confine me to the house; and I foresee but little chance of my sleeping under your roof for many nights to come. I must therefore reply to your questions by the penny post, although what I have to say is not worth a farthing.

First, however, let me wish you many, many happy new years in the discharge of your untried duties; for I reckon your experience at Thaxted as of little or no service to you at Homerton. It is a far more difficult task to teach those who are to be teachers themselves, than to correct the exercises of a few little lay-boys. Now your business is very serious. I know that it is the high office of another to instruct the students in theology; but I am certain that their residence with a man of your learning, energy, and reputation, will render your influence, in forming their characters and their creed, much more effectual than the most orthodox lectures on the thirty-nine articles. To speak out, too, he appears to me to be but a dry sort of a wet-nurse; and besides, he may, perhaps, like some of his brother professors, fall fast asleep in his chair, and do neither good nor harm. To unlearn is harder than to learn, and the Grecian flute-player was right in requiring double fees

from those pupils who had been taught by another master. "I am rubbing their father out of my children as fast I can," said a clever widow of rank and fashion.

It is fortunate for you, in some respects, that the young people in your interesting family are not the spoilt children of rich or distinguished parents. If Fenelon did succeed, as it is recorded he did, in educating the dauphin, his success was little less than a miracle. How can any man, though of advanced age and of high reputation, perhaps also of a sacred profession and of elevated station, be expected to preserve any useful authority over a child, (probably a wayward little animal,) if he, the tutor, must always address the pupil by his title, or at least must never forget that he is heir to a throne?

I do not deny that the habits of the young who have been brought up in poverty may present obstacles of another kind; and I believe that some, who enter the ministry, may be tempted by the desire of being reckoned gentlemen. This jealous and irritable sort of vanity calls both for tenderness and for correction.

Education cannot do all that Helvetius supposes, but it can do much. "*Elle fait danser l'ours.*" It is said that some insects take the colour of the leaf that they feed upon. "I was common clay till roses were planted in me," says some aromatic earth in an eastern fable.

What passed at our hospitable bookseller's table, last week, naturally excited your attention; and I will, as you desire, try to borrow the Swiss gentleman's letter respecting education from Dr. Knox. Emulation has been at all times relied upon as a chief instrument in education, and now comes a philosopher of great experience who discourages the use of it. Certainly, if the

mere passion for truth could do the business ; if young men could be expected to fall desperately in love with " the beauty of theorem," the results would be of exceeding value, both in kind and in degree. Can this be trusted to ? Alas, no !

One practice, however, can be reformed, that of giving prizes and commendations only to those who get on the fastest. 'Tis the endeavour, the struggle, the obedience, that should be praised and rewarded. Then a child will not be disheartened by difficulties, nor humiliated by failure ; because, when he does his best, he will be sure of approbation. Otherwise, as soon as he is passed in the race by his competitors, he will be inclined to lie down in the dust, with his little heart full of despair, and perhaps full of envy too.

There was one observation which we agreed in—I never did expect much from merely didactic lectures. Knowledge cannot be truly ours till we have appropriated it by some operation of our own minds. The best writers on property in land attribute that right to the first proprietor having blended his own labour with the soil. Something like this is true of intellectual attainments. For example, surely the best mode of teaching moral philosophy would be by giving each pupil a set of questions : such as—

" Why should truth be spoken ?"

" Why should a promise be kept, and a debt paid ?"

" What is the meaning of the word *ought* ?"

The learners should, indeed, be told that many different answers have been given in all ages ; and the most celebrated as well as the most satisfactory authors should be pointed out to them. But they should select their

own answers; after being encouraged to reflect as well as to read.

Behold what you have brought upon yourself by the grave and urgent air of your enquiries, and by not waiting till we could take a turn together in your garden of gardens; where "*cum una, meherculè, ambulatiuncula, atque uno sermone nostro, omnes provinciæ fructus non confero;*" addicted as I am to the distant mountains,

TO A YOUNG FRIEND AT COLLEGE.

Fredley Farm, July 29, 1806.

Well ! you have left St. Paul's, and have settled yourself at Cambridge, with your heart full of hopes and brave resolutions. You well know that I not only wish, but that I am anxious for, your success, in life ; and I have confidence in your capacity. However, my favourable anticipations arise chiefly from your being aware that your station in society must depend entirely on your own exertions. Luckily you have not to overcome the disadvantage of expecting to inherit, from your father, an income equal to your reasonable desires ; for, though it may have the air of a paradox, yet it is truly a serious disadvantage when a young man, going to the bar, is sufficiently provided for. "An inherited fortune, but not an acquired one, makes life more happy," says Martial, but not wisely ; and no young man should believe him.

The Lord Chief Justice Kenyon once said to a rich friend asking his opinion as to the probable success of a son, "Sir, let your son forthwith spend his fortune ; marry, and spend his wife's ; and then he may be expected to apply with energy to his profession."

In your case I have no doubts, but such as arise from my having observed that, perhaps, you sometimes may have relied rather too much on the quickness of your

talents, and too little on diligent study. Pardon me for owning this, and attribute my frankness to my regard.

It is unfortunate when a man's intellectual and his moral character are not suited to each other. The horses in a carriage should go the same pace and draw in the same direction, or the motion will be neither pleasant nor safe.

Bonaparte has remarked of one of his marshals, "that he had a military genius, but had not intrepidity enough in the field to execute his own plans;" and of another he said, "He is as brave as his sword, but he wants judgment and resources; neither," he added, "is to be trusted with a great command."

This want of harmony between the talents and the temperament is often found in private life; and, wherever found, it is the fruitful source of faults and sufferings. Perhaps there are few less happy than those who are ambitious without industry; who pant for the prize, but will not run the race; who thirst for truth, but are too slothful to draw it up from the well.

Now this defect, whether arising from indolence or from timidity, is far from being incurable. It may, at least in part, be remedied by frequently reflecting on the endless encouragements to exertion held out by our own experience and by example.

"C'est des difficultés que naissent les miracles."*

It is not every calamity that is a curse, and *early* adversity especially is often a blessing. Perhaps Madame

* Difficulties give rise to miracles.

de Maintenon would never have mounted a throne had not her cradle been rocked in a prison. Surmounted obstacles not only teach, but hearten us in our future struggles; for virtue must be learnt, though unfortunately some of the vices come, as it were, by inspiration. The austerities of our northern climate are thought to be the cause of our abundant comforts; as our wintry nights and our stormy seas have given us a race of seamen, perhaps unequalled, and certainly not surpassed by any in the world.

"Mother," said a Spartan lad going to battle, "my sword is too short." "Add a step to it," she replied; but it must be owned that this advice was to be given only to a Spartan boy. They should not be thrown into the water who cannot swim—I know your buoyancy, and I have no fears of your being drowned.

TO THE SAME.

Fredley Farm, August 3, 1806.

You should not listen to ****, but prefer, without hesitation, a life of energy to a life of inaction. There are always kind friends enough ready to preach up caution and delay, &c. &c. Yet it is impossible to lay down any general rules of a prudential kind. Every case must be judged of after a careful review of all its circumstances; for if one, only one, can be overlooked, the decision may be injurious or fatal. Thus there ever will be many conflicting reasons for and against a spirit of enterprise and a habit of caution.

Those who advise others to withstand the temptations of hope will always appear to be wiser than they really are; for how often can it be made certain that the rejected and untried hazard would have been successful? Besides, those who dissuade us from action have corrupt but powerful allies in our indolence, irresolution, and cowardice. To despond is very easy, but it requires works as well as faith to engage successfully in a difficult undertaking.

There are, however, few difficulties that hold out against real attacks; they fly, like the visible horizon, before those who advance. A passionate desire and an unwearied will can perform impossibilities, or what seem to be such to the cold and the feeble. If we do but go on, some unseen path will open among the hills.

We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged by the apparent disproportion between the result of single efforts and the magnitude of the obstacles to be encountered. Nothing good nor great is to be obtained without courage and industry ; but courage and industry must have sunk in despair, and the world must have remained unornamented and unimproved, if men had nicely compared the effect of a single stroke of the chisel with the pyramid to be raised, or of a single impression of the spade with the mountain to be leveled.

All exertion too is in itself delightful, and active amusements seldom tire us. Helvetius owns that he could hardly listen to a concert for two hours, though he could play on an instrument all day long. The chase, we know, has always been the favourite amusement of kings and nobles. Not only fame and fortune, but pleasure is to be earned.

Efforts, it must not be forgotten, are as indispensable as desires. The globe is not to be circumnavigated by one wind. We should never do nothing. "It is better to wear out than to rust out," says Bishop Cumberland. "There will be time enough for repose in the grave," said Nicole to Pascal. In truth, the proper rest for man is change of occupation.

As a young man, you should be mindful of the unspeakable importance of early industry, since in youth habits are easily formed, and there is time to recover from defeats. An Italian sonnet justly, as well as elegantly, compares procrastination to the folly of a traveller who pursues a brook till it widens into a river and is lost in the sea. The toils as well as risks of an active life are commonly overrated, so much may be done by

the diligent use of ordinary opportunities ; but they must not always be waited for. We must not only strike the iron while it is hot, but strike it till " it is made hot." Herschel, the great astronomer, declares that ninety or one hundred hours, clear enough for observations, cannot be called an unproductive year.

The lazy, the dissipated, and the fearful, should patiently see the active and the bold pass them in the course. They must bring down their pretensions to the level of their talents. Those who have not energy to work must learn to be humble, and should not vainly hope to unite the incompatible enjoyments of indolence and enterprise, of ambition and self-indulgence. I trust that my young friend will never attempt to reconcile them.

TO THE SAME.

London, February 4, 1808.

I am glad to hear of your gaining the prize; and, to say the truth, I am better pleased that you owe it to your proficiency in Latin prose than in Latin verse. Not that I think, as many do, that too much time is spent at our great schools in the latter, but it appears to me that too little time is given to the former.

Considering that the Roman language is not only that of the classical writers, but, formerly, was that of law and of philosophy, it is plain that the motives are many and strong for attaining an habitual facility of understanding the tongue wherein such inestimable works have been written. Perhaps, too, the practice of writing is indispensable as the preparation for reading without difficulty.

Yet I desire that you should not misunderstand me. It is neither my intention nor my wish to undervalue poetry, nor even the custom of making verses in a living or a dead language. I do not know any means of becoming so intimately acquainted with the powers of a language as by composing verses. The restraints of metre, and the necessity of selecting expressions that are not only clear but elegant, compel an author to vary and enrich his phraseology by every allowable idiom. No! not one even of the abstrusest sciences calls for more severe attention, nor more subtle distinctions; and surely none requires the fancy and the feeling, without which

verse is of so little worth that it is not sterling, but merely a kind of plated prose. Do not think, therefore, that you are wasting your time in the exercises demanded of you at college, although you are intended for a grave and laborious profession, busied in the noisy highways of real life, and leading far away from the quiet field-paths of literature and philosophy.

To talk to you about the high rank or the principles of poetry is quite needless. No subject has been treated of by abler writers. Yet, as you wish to recall some parts of our last long conversation, I will again mention a short forgotten passage of an author, who was made ridiculous by the humorous attacks of Swift and Pope. Dennis says, somewhere, of poetry, "*It should be simple, sensuous, and passionate.*"

Perhaps the word "sensuous" is not sufficiently authorised, but, no matter! you will not find elsewhere so brief and so complete an enumeration of the chief qualities in the noblest art.*

* *Note*, 1834. In Gray's Common-place-book is the following striking passage:—"In former times, they loved, I will not say tediousness, but length, and a train of circumstances, in a narration. The vulgar do so still: it gives an air of reality to the facts, it fixes the attention, raises and keeps in suspense their expectation, and supplies the place of their little and lifeless imagination; and it keeps pace with the slow motion of their own thoughts. Tell them a story as you would to a man of wit: it will appear to them as an object seen in the night by a flash of lightning: but when you have placed it in various lights, and various positions, they will come at last to see and feel it as well as others. But we need not confine ourselves to the vulgar, and to understandings beneath our own. *Circumstance* ever was and ever will be the essence both of poetry and oratory. It has in some sort the same

There are also in Priestley's Lectures on Oratory some excellent remarks, beginning thus: "In order thoroughly to interest a reader, it is of singular advantage to be very circumstantial, and to introduce as many *sensible* images as possible."

Your own memory cannot fail to suggest many proofs of this maxim; but I must warn you not to fall into the common error of supposing that sensible images mean allusions to the object of *sight* only.—Voltaire goes so far as to say, "Every metaphor should be an image which can be painted. This is a rule which admits of no exception." Pope seems to have been misled too often in the choice of epithets by this mistake. One instance you may remember my noticing, where he thus renders a line in the first book of the *Iliad*—

"Then in the sheath returned the *shining* blade,"

which Dryden had translated far more spiritedly and more characteristically of the impetuous hero—

"And in the sheath reluctant plunged the blade:"

Do you not hear the *hilt* ring against the cover?

Let me mention, in an instance of a touching allusion to another sense, a couplet of a celebrated living poet describing some children at play among the tombs—

*effect upon every mind that it has upon that of the populace; and I fear the quickness and delicate impatience of these polished times are but the forerunners of the decline of all those beautiful arts which depend upon the imagination * * * * Homer, the father of Circumstance, has occasion for the same apology.*"

"Alas! unconscious of the kindred earth,
That faintly echoed to the voice of mirth."

Take, too, a whole stanza from the "*Annus Mirabilis*," chiefly for the sake of one little word—

"As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
(Till Time digests the yet imperfect ore,)
Knowing it will be gold another day."

The word "passionate" needs no explanation; but you must not forget poetry should be "simple," and though it must be allowed to magnify its objects and to brighten their colours, it ought not to change their forms and proportions. It may exaggerate, but must not distort.

This warning is much needed; for, of the three qualities, simplicity is most frequently forgotten by the writer, though not by the reader. It is easier, you know, to make a Venus fine than beautiful.

Ambitious but feeble writers in prose and in verse are often hyperbolical, and for the sake of being thought "imaginative," pour forth redundant and inconsistent metaphors; though such extravagance is scarcely less opposed than weakness is to sublimity; as exaggeration is a more mischievous enemy to truth than contradiction.

Mixed metaphors are a sure proof of a feeble imagination, since a distinct and vivid conception of one image cannot be confused with another;—a simile beginning with a fire could not end in a flood.

There is another kind of offence against simplicity which should be shunned: though it occurs often in

Johnson, and though the abstract terms, affected by him, give a kind of false pomp to the style, assuming the air of personification. He thus commences his imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal—

“Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru.”

Dryden and Pope would have been satisfied with the second line, and would have avoided both the tautology and pomposity of the first.

Cowper has committed the same fault when he exclaims—

“Oh! for a lodge in some vast wilderness!
Some boundless *contiguity* of shade!”

He should have stopped at the end of the first line; or if he wished to dwell on the intensity of the retirement, he should have rejected the swollen word “contiguity.” Even “some boundless and impenetrable shade” would have been better.

All affectation and appearance of effort are as disagreeable in poetry as insipidity, though that is certainly the sin (never to be forgiven) against its spirit. Its character, its very essence, being to give pleasure, all its subordinate qualities must be estimated in subservience to this necessity. Thus it is requisite that the diction should not only be perspicuous, and select, and animated, but also melodious; and, when we talk of poetical prose, we mean that some of the other excellences of poetry

are there; but it is implied that one great beauty is absent, the music of the metre—

“Et vera incessu patuit Dea.”*

Luckily for me, though verse is obliged to be entertaining, a letter is not; for it may be both long and dull, if sent in the hope of doing service, and when the writer can truly subscribe himself, as I do now,

“Affectionately yours.”

* And the true goddess was discovered by her gait.

TO THE SAME.

22d May, 1809.

"Io ti vedo"—You are found out. It is easy to see, through all your letters, that the hot verse-fit of the intermittent is strong upon you; else you would not be so importunate for my counsel. Under the pretext of seeking advice, you indulge your love by talking about its object.

Your self-distrust is a good symptom. Very few can be eminent in the most delightful and difficult of all arts; and none, who are well satisfied with themselves, can be expected to satisfy others.

I should not be your friend if I did not dissuade you from making the inevitable sacrifice of all other pursuits to the "idle trade—"

"Where once such fairies dance no grass doth grow."

Yet I have encouraged your trying to bend the bow of Ulysses, for better reasons than because I hoped you to perform a miracle impossible to any but the inspired.

Patient study is requisite; but, the more I think, the more am I convinced that in poetry an irresistible and peculiar genius is indispensable. In this art an industry that never sleeps can do much; but gifts, natural gifts, can do much more. A little difference in native genius,

when augmented by practice, is like a small superiority in the first number of a geometrical series.

I will not say the same of any other intellectual effort; but in writing verse the first thoughts should always be respected, perhaps preferred.

You beg for more instances to explain a remark in my last letter. They are found to be in every page of your Homer. Perhaps circumstantiality is the chief distinction between Greek and Latin poetry; between first and second-rate excellence. Dante and Shakspeare also abound in particulars drawn from every sense.

I am inclined to think as you do of Dryden and Pope. The former seldom seems to do his very best; the latter always. Of course the reader ranks Dryden above his works, but not so as to Pope. Yet, to be honest, let me ask who does not read the latter verses most frequently, and remember them better too? Indeed we have them by heart.

As to the imitative words that you speak of, you need not trouble yourself about them. "Suiting the sound to the sense" has another and a better meaning, but it will seldom be graceful unless unsought. Milton is very happy, or very skilful, in this flow of metre harmonising with the sentiment and the description. Thus Satan

"Throws his steep flight in mǎnŷ ān āēry whīrl."

"Lights on his feet, as when a prowling wolf
Leāps o'ēr thē fence with ease intō the fold."

"Sin towards the gate rolling her bestial train."

"Celestial voices to the midnight air
Sole, or responsive to each other's notes."

For these, and indeed for all the beauties of poetry, believe me, that it is safer to trust to one's unconscious and unaffected habits of thinking and feeling, than to the best rules gathered even from the greatest examples. Such habits are the last result of all our mental associations. No maxims can be subtle nor comprehensive enough to guide invention.

In spite of the critics, the general favourites have ever been those who excel rather in spirit and variety, than in elaborate execution; though, in the rare instances where both unite, the poet is worshipped, and the work immortal.

Gray, it must be owned, is a consummate workman in every respect, but in failing to preserve that bewitching air of freedom and facility for whose absence there is no full compensation.

There is something similar to this in our hand-writing. A painted letter, as it is called, can never be taken for one flowing from the first stroke of the pen. This opinion, notwithstanding, should not hinder previous study and much practice; since it relates only to the moment of actual composition. "You charge me fifty sequins," said a Venitian nobleman to a sculptor, "for a bust that cost you only ten days' labour."—"You forget," replied the artist, "that I have been thirty years learning to make that bust in ten days."

Of merely verbal figures little needs be said, though the ablest writers (Cicero especially) use them freely.

You were struck, I remember, by old Lydgate's daring repetition of one word, in speaking of a child—

"Fair is not fair enough for one so fair."

Such forms of speech are displeasing when they are evidently contrived, though they add both force and elegance when they present themselves to the mind. It sometimes happens that a perfect symmetry, a formality in the phrase, a daring metaphor, an hyperbole, are the most natural and proper expression of the thought or sentiment. "The more vigorous, the more beautiful." These beauties should be neither sought nor shunned.

Indeed too much anxiety about expression defeats itself. It may as well be expected that a dancer always thinking of the five positions should move with ease and grace, as that an author should write agreeably, who is fettered by habitual self-criticism. It is no paradox to say that the perfection of style is to have none, but to let the words be suggested by the sentiments, unchecked by the monotony of a manner and untainted by affectation.

TO A LAW STUDENT.

20th June, 1817.

So you have been several times in the gallery of the house of commons, and were both delighted and disappointed. This is just what I expected. Judging of the speakers by a preconception of the possibilities of the art, they are found wanting; but comparing them with each other, the differences in merit are extreme.

With your expectations raised by reading Demosthenes and Cicero, and by the warmth of party praise, what wonder that, at first, even the very best were not equal to your antelipation!

You need not be told that the general principles of any art must be modified so as to suit the maxims and the habits of the assembly, where they are to be put in practice.

The house of commons is so different a body in its construction and its purposes from any, either ancient or modern, that its idioms, both of thought and of language, must be caught before a man can talk in such a manner as to be liked, or even understood.

It is a place of serious business; and all ostentation, *if perceptible*, is ridiculous. Perhaps one or two individuals may be tolerated and allowed to amuse, merely by ornament, or by wit and humour; but an attempt to succeed in this way is ruinous to a new member. It is unfortunately necessary to have something to say, and

facts or striking arguments the house will always listen to, though delivered in any terms, however homely, or with any accent, however provincial. Speeches also for constituents are heard with indulgence, if not too frequent, nor too long : but debate, real debate, is the characteristic eloquence of the house; and be assured that the India-House, a vestry, a committee, and other meetings of business, are far better preparatory schools for parliament than debating societies are. In these latter self-possession and fluency may be learnt; but vicious habits of declamation, and of hunting for applause, are too often formed. I remember being told, that in the first meetings of a society at a public school, two or three evenings were consumed in debating whether the floor should be covered with a sail-cloth or a carpet; and I have no doubt that better practice was gained in these important discussions, than in those that soon followed on liberty, slavery, passive obedience, and tyrannicide. It has been truly said, that nothing is so unlike a battle as a review.

As an illustration of this spirit of serious business, I must mention a quality, which, presupposing great talents and great knowledge, must always be uncommon; but which makes an irresistible impression on a public assembly of educated men. I mean the merit of stating the question in debate *fairly*; and I mean it as an oratorical, and not merely as a moral, superiority. Any audience, but especially an educated and impatient audience, listens with a totally different kind and degree of attention to a speaker of this character, and to one, who, tempted by the dangerous facility of a feebleness

practice, either alters, or weakens, or exaggerates the language and sentiments of his adversary.

Mr Fox was an illustrious example of this honest, blunt, and bravest manner: nay, sometimes he stated the arguments of his opponents so advantageously, that his friends have been alarmed lest he should fail to answer them. His great rival formerly, and another accomplished orator now living, have seldom ventured on this hazardous candour. In truth, the last mentioned possesses too many talents; for betrayed by his singular powers of declamation and of sarcasm, he often produces more admiration than conviction, and rarely delivers an important speech without making an enemy for life. Had he been a less man he would be a greater speaker, and a better leader in a popular assembly.

This good faith in controversy not only manifests, but nourishes also another great oratorical excellence,—a hearty love of the subject and a deep sense of the public welfare, prevailing over that self-regard and desire of victory, inseparable, in some degree, from the infirmity of human nature.

It is not without some misgiving that I perceive with how much more interest you talk of parliament than of chemistry. It is very usual and very natural to prefer the former. Let me entreat you to consider well. I have heard one of the ablest and most efficient men in this country (actually at the time the chosen leader of the Opposition, enjoying the fame of such a station, and looking forwards, doubtless, to high office) own, more than once, with much emotion, that he had made a fatal mistake in preferring parliament to the bar. At the bar he well knew that he must have risen to opulence and to rank,

and he bitterly regretted having forsaken his lawful wife, the profession, for that fascinating but impoverishing harlot, politics.

If you should abandon your Penelope and your home for Calypso, remember that I told you of the advice given, in my hearing, at different times to a young lawyer, by Mr. Windham, and by Mr Horne Tooke—not to look for a seat till he had pretensions to be made solicitor-general.

Yours is so laborious a calling, and your competitors are so many and so keen, that not only ambition but amusement tempts many to quit the Inns of Court; and I have known several very able young men drawn aside by making a single continental tour, during the long vacation. A passion for traveling has overcome both prudence and the love of distinction.

You will now understand why I was glad to hear that you are going, with your sisters, no farther than to Brighton. There Coke and Blackstone will help you profitably (and why not pleasantly?) through the hot hours in the middle of the day; and if you should take the siesta, you will dream of being Lord Chancellor or Lord Chief Justice.

TO THE SAME.

2d December, 1817.

If your low spirits arise from bodily illness (as is often the case), you must consult Dr. Baillie. I can do nothing for you. Perhaps you should fast a little, and walk, and ride. But if they are caused by disappointment, by impatience, or by calamity, you can do much for yourself. The well-known, worn out topics of consolation and of encouragement are become trite, because they are reasonable, and you will soon be cured, if you steadily persevere in a course of moral alteratives.

You have no right to be dispirited, possessing as you do all that one of the greatest, as well as oldest sages has declared to be the only requisites for happiness—a sound mind, a sound body, and a competence.

An anxious, restless temper, that runs to meet care on its way, that regrets lost opportunities too much, and that is over-painstaking in contrivances for happiness, is foolish, and should not be indulged. "One ought to be happy without thinking too much about it."

If you cannot be happy in one way, be happy in another; and this facility of disposition wants but little aid from philosophy, for health and good-humour are almost the whole affair. Many run about after felicity, like an absent man hunting for his hat, while it is on his head, or in his hand.

Though sometimes small evils, like invisible insects,

inflict great pain, yet the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in prudently cultivating an under-growth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases.

I cannot help seeing that you are dissatisfied with your occupation, and that you think yourself unlucky in having been destined to take it up, before you were old enough to choose for yourself. Do not be too sure that you would have chosen well. I somewhere met with an observation, which, being true, is important—that in a masquerade, where people assume what characters they like, “how ill they often play them!” Many parts are probably preferred for the sake of the dress; and do not many young men enter into the navy or army, that they may wear a sword and a handsome uniform, and be acceptable partners at a ball? Vanity is hard-hearted, and insists upon wealth, rank, and admiration. Even so great a man as Prince Eugene owned (after gaining a useless victory) that “on travaille trop pour la Gazette.” Such objects or pursuits are losing their value every day, and you must have observed that rank gives now but little precedence, except in a procession.

But I am really ashamed even to hint at such endless and obvious commonplaces, and I shall only repeat the remark, which seems to have struck you—that in all the professions, high stations seem to have come down to us, rather than that we have got up to them.

But you, forsooth, are too sensible to be ambitious; and you are, perhaps, only disheartened by some unforeseen obstacles to reasonable desires. Be it so! but this will not justify, nor even excuse, dejection. Untoward accidents will sometimes happen; but, after many, many

state of thoughtful experience, I can truly say, that nearly all those, who began life with me, have succeeded, or failed as they deserved. "Faber quisque fortunæ præsit" [Each one the architect of his own fortune.]

All fortune at your age is often good for us, both in teaching and in leading the mind; and even in our later days it may often be turned to advantage, or overcome. Hurdson, trifling precautions will often prevent great mischiefs; as a slight turn of the wrist parries a martial thrust.

Forgive me for talking in this lecturing manner. Am I doing you wrong? Am I, unawares, increasing the weakness that I am most anxious to dispel? I am not without some fear that I am galling the wound which I wish to heal. Once more, forgive me; and be assured that I am, &c. &c.

TO THE SAME.

January 7, 1818.

I certainly did not wish that you should starve yourself, or run about, like a penny postman, either on foot, or on horseback; for moderation is not only the law of enjoyment, but of wholesome labour too.

You have begun to adopt new habits with the zeal of a repentant convert, and, as you have great speed, it is of consequence that you should travel in the right road.

I rejoice to hear that you have already subdued and cast out the blue devils that beset you. Some men are possessed by another, and a more dangerous kind, which enter the voluptuous, the vain, the idle, and the unprincipled; but they must be exorcised by stronger forms of incantation, and you are not likely to be assaulted by such evil spirits. A German says, that "Luther knew what he was about when he threw his ink-stand at Satan's head, for there is nothing the devil hates like ink."

You are luckily not framed for idleness, and you are therefore in no danger of being led aside from the shortest, the safest, and the pleasantest path to happiness, which, you may be sure, is soonest found by those that live a life of action and of duty. This is almost preaching, I know, "*mais c'est jour de sermon*,"—for you have teased me into mounting the pulpit; sit down, therefore, and hear me patiently. The discourse shall be very short,

and you must not attribute my advice to *self-sufficiency*, for it is often founded on my own past mistakes.

It would be needless to repeat what I wrote, long since, to a friend of yours and mine, since you have read these letters recommending industry and perseverance; yet I ought to confess that though you may look to your understanding for amusement, it is to the affections that we must trust for happiness. These imply a spirit of self-sacrifice; and often our virtues, like our children, are endeared to us by what we suffer for them. Conscience, even when it fails to govern our conduct, can disturb our peace of mind. Yes! it is neither paradoxical, nor merely poetical, to say

“That seeking others’ good, we find our own.”

This solid, yet romantic maxim, is found in no less a writer than Plato; who, sometimes, in his moral lessons, as well as in his theological, is almost, though not altogether, a Christian.

But this truth does not stand in need of support from authority. The days and nights of every tender mother abound with instances of this encouraging fact. She will not only endure any toil, but brave any danger, for the sake of her helpless child—

“Oh ! femmes c’est à tort qu’on vous nomme timides,
A la voix de vos cœurs vous êtes intrepides.”*

No! human nature is not so wholly selfish as it is represented by Rochefoucault and by Swift.

* Oh ! woman, it is wrong to call you timid : at the voice of your hearts, you are intrepid.

Satirical writers and talkers are not half so clever as they think themselves, nor as they are thought to be. They do winnow the corn, 'tis true, but 'tis to feed upon the chaff.

I am sorry to add that they who are always speaking ill of others, are also very apt to be doing ill to them.

It requires some talent and some generosity to find out talent and generosity in others, though nothing but self-conceit and malice are needed to discover, or to imagine faults. It is much easier for an ill-natured than for a good-natured man to be smart and witty—

“Did he not speak ill of others,
None would ever speak of him.”

The most gifted men that I have known have been the least addicted to depreciate either friends or foes.—Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, were always more inclined to overrate them. Your shrewd, sly, evil-speaking fellow is generally a shallow personage, and, frequently, he is as venomous and as false when he flatters, as when he reviles,—he seldom praises John but to vex Thomas.

Do not, pray do not! “sit in the seat of the scorner,” whose nature it is to sneer at every thing but impudent vice, and successful crime. By these he is generally awed and silenced.

Are these poor heartless creatures to be envied? Can you think that the Duc de Richelieu was a happier man than Fenelon? or Dean Swift than Bishop Berkeley? You know better. You are not accustomed to turn the tapestry that you may look at the wrong side.

TO THE SAME.

January, 22, 1818.

You are audience enough for me. I would rather be of some service to you than harangue successfully at a public meeting, as multitudinous as that which we attended the other day at Freemasons' Hall.

You travel very fast in imagination: you have a long night, and see the road a long way before you. That exquisite dialogue, "*De Senectute*," seems to have made you wish to be, at once, as old as Cato, that you may enjoy his pleasures and exhibit his skill in the best of all arts, the art of living.

Do not wait, however; but, as you run along, snatch at every fruit and every flower growing within your reach; for, after all that can be said, youth, the age of hope and admiration, and manhood, the age of business and of influence, are to be preferred to the period of extinguished passions and languid curiosity. At that season our hopes and wishes must have been too long dropping, lost by loaf, away. The last scenes of the fifth act are seldom the most interesting either in a tragedy or a comedy. Yet many compensations arise as our sensibility decays.

"Time steals away the rose 'tis true,
But then the thorn is blunted too."

Though I like much better than these humiliating

thoughts the spirit of Montaigne's sturdy determination, "Les ans peuvent m'entraîner, mais à réculons !"

On this subject I have read a letter written by a distinguished clergyman, from which I send you an extract.

"Certainly, if a man loses his leg, he need not fear corns. As to the abstract question of boyish or manly happiness, I own I think differently of it according to the temper I am in, or (after the French philosophers) according to the state of my digestion.

"I have no recollection in my boyish days of quiet happiness, but of many fears, perturbations, &c., and a continual longing for the dignity and the independence of the manly state. Now that I am a man, and verging towards an old one, I find my vessel suffers but little from the short gusts and rippings of the passions ; but is borne along under a tattered sail by the steady tradewind of solicitude. When I was a boy, my pleasures and cares were selfish ; now I care and think more for others than for myself. Here I exult in some little advantage from the comparison ; and yet, after all, the *prospect* is the chief subject of comparison. That of a boy is full of change and novelty. That of an elderly man admits of little variety and no novelty, but the great one of all—a new existence ! The conclusion of this long sermon is, that a thoughtful boy may be happy without religion, but a thoughtful man cannot."

I can add nothing to this worth your reading, so farewell ! and may you live long enough to feel that the writer has not overrated the delights of an old man in looking forward to a better world !

TO THE SAME.

, November 8, 1819.

You are desirous, I see, that I should not fancy my letters are tiresome; and I, therefore, once more assure you that our correspondence cannot be irksome to me so long as I can hope that it may be serviceable to you.

Of one thing pray be certain, that every person should retain the indisputable right of following or disregarding advice; inasmuch as a man himself must be far better acquainted than another can be, with his own inmost wishes and real capabilities.

It is at once an odious and a ridiculous kind of tyranny to take it ill of a friend that he judges for himself in the last resort. "Ah! if he had but followed my advice," "I told him what must happen," and all such betrayings of wounded vanity, are proofs that good sense and good will have both been wanting.

Indeed, if a selfish and conceited man's object is to gain a character for sagacity, he should be glad when his counsel has been disregarded. Human life is so liable to unforeseen troubles, that, whatsoever course may be pursued, we shall often regret the lot that we have chosen. As a bachelor I can be no judge of a known saying, "If you marry, or if you do not marry, you will repent." But this will serve as a specimen of the general language. Herein, however, we must avoid the opposite and prevailing evil practice of asking advice for

the sake only of stealing a sanction, or a help to our own predeterminations. I was sincerely pleased by the frankness of a young lady, who, being urged to consult me respecting an offer of marriage, replied, "Why should I wait? My mind is made up, and I will not use an old friend so ill as to trouble him for advice which I shall not be guided by."

It would not be easy to mention any habit more pernicious than that of listening or reading with a secret resolve to reject, or to elude every opinion that does not suit our own inclinations. Immediate obedience should follow the decisions of the understanding and the stimulus of benevolent emotions. One of the most serious objections to pathetic works of fiction is that they tend to create a habit of feeling pity or indignation without actually relieving distress or resisting oppression.

Oh! it is very easy to cherish, like Sterne, the sensibilities that lead to no sacrifices and to no inconvenience. Most of those that are so vain of their fine feelings are persons loving themselves very dearly, and having a violent regard for their fellow creatures in general, though caring little or nothing for the individuals about them. Of sighs and tears they are profuse, but niggardly of their money and their time. Montaigne speaks of a man as extraordinary, "who has super-celestial opinions, without having subterranean habits." In Butler's profound discourses, and in a sermon of Priestly "on the duty of not living to ourselves," these counterfeits of sterling benevolence are well detected and exposed.

Nearly akin to this habit of taking advice without following it, and of dissevering action from sympathy, is the practice of the irresolute in deliberating without de-

ciding,—“What I cannot resolve upon in half an hour,” said the Duc de Guise, “I cannot resolve upon at all.” In the Memoirs of the Cardinal du Retz, you will find many amusing and instructive instances of the conspirators shrinking from the painful necessity of decision.

It is unwholesome as well as unpleasant to stand shivering on the brink of a cold bath—I am glad that you have plunged. Don’t you feel a glow of self-satisfaction when you put on your gown and wig? Somebody says, “Sweet is the sleep that follows suspense.” Now that you have actually been *called*, I need not say “Good night.”

TO SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

Fredley, 10th September, 1812.

I do not wonder that you should be embarrassed and delayed by the extreme difficulty of giving a narrative form to the materials collected, and to the reflections that must have occurred to a man of your philosophical turn.

As we walked up Kirkston some weeks ago, you will perhaps recollect that I quoted imperfectly (what I shall now copy) a passage from Hobbes's remarkable preface to his translation of Thucydides.

"The principal and proper work of history being to instruct, and enable men by the knowledge of actions past to bear themselves prudently in the present, and providently towards the future, there is not extant any other (merely human) that doth more fully and naturally perform it than this of my author. It is true, that there be many excellent and profitable histories written since; and in some of them, there be inserted very wise discourses both of manners and policy; but being discourses inserted, and not of the contexture of the narration, they indeed commend the knowledge of the writer, but not the history itself; the nature whereof is merely narrative. In others, there be subtle conjectures at the secret aims and inward cogitations of such as fall under their pen; which is also none of the least virtues in a history, where the conjecture is thoroughly grounded, not forced to serve the purpose of the writer in adorning his style: or mani-

feasting his subtilty in conjecturing. But these conjectures cannot often be certain, unless withal so evident that the narration itself may be sufficient to suggest the same also to the reader. But THUCYDIDES is one, who though he never digress to read a lecture, moral or political, upon his own text, nor enter into men's hearts, further than the actions themselves evidently guide him, is yet accounted the most politic historiographer that ever writ. The reason whereof I take to be this: he filleth his narrations with that choice of matter, and ordereth them with that judgment, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresseth himself, that (as Plutarch saith) he maketh his auditor a spectator. For he setteth his reader in the assemblies of the people, and in the senates, at their debating; in the streets, at their seditions; and in the field, at their battles! So that look how much a man of understanding might have added to his experience, if he had then lived a beholder of their proceedings, and familiar with the men and business of the time; so much *what* may he profit now, by attentive reading of the same here written. He may from the narrations draw out lessons to himself, and of himself be able to trace the drifts and counsels of the actors to their seat."

You observed, and I admitted, that the truth is here somewhat exaggerated. It would require infinite dexterity, as well as a continual sacrifice of vanity, to write in this manner; but, so far as it is attainable, how instructive and delightful!

Even Hume, who tells his story so well, is often ostentatious of his opinions, and becomes rather a philosophical commentator than a skilful historian. So does a greater writer still, Burke, both in his "Account of the European

Settlements," and in his masterly "Fragment of English History;" but he never is deficient in vivacity and variety. One source of both these excellences may be found in the judicious practice of borrowing freely from the original writers and from the documents of the times, altering the expression only by discarding obscure, uncouth, and redundant words.

How expressive is this short passage, in a speech of Edward the Fourth to his parliament! "The injuries that I have received are known every where, and the eyes of the world are fixed upon me to see with what countenance I suffer."

If actual events could often be related in this way, there would be more books in circulating libraries than romances and travels.

This lively and graphic style is plainly the best, though now and then the historian's criticism is wanted to support a startling fact, or to explain a confused transaction. Thus the learned Rudbeck, in his "Atlantica," ascribing an ancient temple in Sweden to one of Noah's sons, warily adds "'twas probably the youngest." You will, of course, hasten to study his book—it is only in four volumes folio.

I cannot help adding, that if you will read, with a pencil in your hand, more than one celebrated historian, you will be surprised to find yourself making so many grave observations, worthy of the cautious Swede.

There is one grand incident in our own annals, presenting the means of producing a work at least as interesting and instructive as any public story, ancient or modern. You know that I mean the establishment of

American Independence. Do I say too much in speaking of this as the principal event in all civil history ?

Only think of the magnitude and the nature of the question at issue ; of its consequence as an example ; of the successful termination of the struggle ; of the elevated and accomplished actors both in the United States and in England. The battle was as much fought at home as abroad ; and some of the combatants were the King, Lord Chatham, Lord North, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, General Washington, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Jefferson.—Think, too, of the manifestoes, the proclamations, the Declaration of Independence ; and “last not least,” of the speeches, which would furnish abler and more authentic examples of eloquence than are found in Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus. These dramatic documents have always been the allowed and admired ornaments of history.

One surprising instance, equally honourable to the speaker and to the assembly that bore it, is the famous exclamation of Lord Chatham,—“My Lords ! I rejoice that America has resisted.” Do not forget that this man had been minister, and meant to be minister again.

Oh ! how I shall regret if these random thoughts should add to your perplexities, instead of exciting you to burst through them ! Not one syllable of our mountain-talk would I have recalled to your recollection, if you had not owned that you had yet to begin.

For my own gratification, I would much rather have your “Lectures” than “the History,” but not so feel the public ; to whom you have made a promise, or are thought to have made one. A seat in the house of commons, while it must improve your manner, by substituting

the tone of business for that of dissertation, will, alas ! encroach upon your leisure, and perhaps endanger your health.

When you come hither to restore the latter, pray bring all the papers that you can want, for the barn will hold what the cottage cannot.

TO A YOUNG MAN AT OXFORD.

London, May 17th, 1825.

Your mother tells me, that she approves of your going this summer to Ambleside, accompanied by some other students, to read with a tutor.

I have seen with much pleasure that it has of late become usual with the young mathematicians, hoping for "honours," to spend the vacation in this manner. Such a place of residence is even more suitable to those delighting in classical literature; for what can agree better than poetry with the woods and mountains? The bards are ever avowing their passion for the country, and you must have remarked the same in the finest prose-writers. Pliny owns, in a letter to Tacitus, that at Rome, "*poemata quiescunt; quæ tu inter nemora et lucos commodissimè perfici putas.*"* The following passages in the 9th and 10th sections of the celebrated dialogue "*de causis corruptæ eloquentiæ,*" leave little doubt as to its author, notwithstanding the long and learned disputes on the subject. "*Adjice quod poetis, si modo dignum aliquid elaborare et efficere velint, relinquenda conversatio amicorum et jucunditas urbis, in nemora et lucos recedendum est.*"* * * * "*Nemora vero et luci, tantam mihi afferunt voluptatem, ut inter præcipuos carminum fructus numerem, quod nec in strepitu, nec sedente ante*

* "Poetry languishes; which you suppose most easily attains perfection amongst woods and groves."

ostium litigatore, nec inter sordes ac lacrymas reorum componuntur: sed secedit animus in loca pura atque innocentia, fruiturque sedibus sacris."*

I hope you mean to be an indefatigable student, though you talk of visiting *all* the lakes.—Yet beware! it is pleasanter to sail about than to read at home. However, it will give me pleasure to learn that the hints which you request have saved your time, and prevented needless fatigue.

The guides are not always to be trusted, for they naturally wish to keep you as long as they can; and, too often, they arrange the journey with a view to dine at the most comfortable or the most grateful inn.

You will pass so near to the beautiful scenery of Bolton Abbey, that I advise you to employ one day, at least, in visiting the walks and drives made by the clergyman of the place. Sit down on every seat in the valley of the Wharfe and in Posforth glen, whose brook falls into the river. The water-fall has much beauty. The inn is excellent, but small; and you should write to bespeak beds, (using my name if you please,) to Mr. Wilson, Devonshire Arms, Bolton Bridge, near Addingham, Yorkshire.

* Add to this, that poets, if they wish to attain a high degree of excellence in any composition, must leave the society of friends and the delights of the city, and retire to the woods and consecrated groves. * * * * Indeed the woods and sacred groves afford me so much pleasure, that I number amongst the chief advantages of song, that it is not composed amidst clamour and litigation, surrounded by woful faces of prisoners at the bar; but the soul retires into places of purity and innocence, and enjoys a sacred dwelling-place."

Get out of your carriage on the bridge at *Kidby Lane-
dale*, to look up and down the stream, and to walk by the
best path to the Church-yard.

Stop at *Howson*, which is the port-town of *Windermere*.

The views from *Rayrig-bank* (about three quarters of
a mile distant) are superlative.

Now to the Ferry-house, going as close as you can to
Milton, that you may see both its fronts.

At the Ferry, ascend to the Station-house.

Stop a day at *Lawwood Inn*, that you may walk on the
howling stream, and up the *Troutbeck Lane* till you see
the lower end of the lake. The best view, however, is
only one hundred yards up the lane.

At *Ambleton*, you will have time enough to visit every
interesting spot over and over again.

You should go daily to the water-fall behind the
Meltonston Inn, and almost as frequently cross the
meadows leading to a wooden bridge over the *Rotha*, in
order to walk up the stream to *Rydale*. It runs about
conspicuously with you all the way, "now advancing, now
retreating."

At *Rydale*, see the water-falls in the Park; and as you
are fortunate enough to have a letter to Mr. Wordsworth,
you will probably see his grounds, which are admirably
laid out. The terraced foot-path from the garden-gate to
Grasmere is delightful.

Hide by *Clayton-gate*, and *Loughrigg-tarn*, to *Grasmere*.

The upper end of *Conistone-water* should be seen.

The road to *Keawick* abounds in beauties.

Get out of your carriage to look about at a very little
common called "*Browtop*." It is half a mile before
entering the town.

Walk to Friar's Cragg, and do not forget to ascend the swelling-field, close by, called "Strand-hag." Just at the top of this gentle ascent, at the gate, are four or five views, as different as they are striking. What a spot for a house or a pavilion! "Oh! si angulus ille!" The lake seems to belong to the lawn.

Walk by the parsonage to Ormathwaite, or rather to the field on the left of the house.

Ride to Borrodale, seeing Barrow and Lodoar waterfalls, and proceed by Gatesgarth to Buttermere. Here, while the dinner is being dressed, walk to Cromack Lake; and see Scale-force, if you have time.

Return to Keswick by Newlands.

The higher end of Wast-water is very grand, but I do not like to send you on so long a pilgrimage. There is a short horse-path over the Sty-head, but it introduces you to the scenery disadvantageously.

You can ride from Keswick to Ulleswater over the mountain (saving some distance); but you must not lose your way, as I once did in a fog.

Stop at Lyulph's Tower; and, after sitting by the Ara-force, go up the torrent nearly half a mile, crossing the wooden bridge, which hangs over the fall. A path has been made by Mr. Howard, who is good enough to allow strangers to walk there.

From the front of Mr. Marshall's place (Hallstead) is the noblest lake and mountain-view in the north.

You must see the walks in Mr. Askew's grounds.

Near to Patterdale-hall is a waterfall.

The slate-quarries command fine views; and if you have time, you should walk up the Gold-rill to Beckstone's Farm, and to Hartsop village. For nearly a mile above Hartsop-hall, the brook should be explored.

Having seen Wharfedale as you went, you had best return by Wensleydale, Hackfall and Studley, unless you wish to see Liverpool, and the rail-road just commenced.

You will have observed that I trouble you with few remarks and fewer exclamations, supposing that you will travel with your eyes open.

The most complete description of the lakes is Mr. Wordsworth's, but it has higher merits than mere accuracy. Gray's letters, though he saw but little, are exquisite.

There are two mistakes often made by travellers in the north and on the continent: that of loitering on the road to visit inferior places before they reach the Lakes, or the Alps; and that of wasting time and strength in hunting after novelty, instead of dwelling on the noblest scenes and getting them by heart. Much needless toil is undergone to fill the journal and the sketch-book. Madame de Stael complained to me, at Coppet, that she was often annoyed by travellers, who, as they had nothing to say to her, must have come merely to record the visit in their diaries, or add a paragraph to their letters.

ON POVERTY.

In De Rulhiere's *Anecdotes of the Revolution in Russia*, there is a short story exemplifying that decay of the ancient respect for rank, and that growth of a regard for wealth, so observable of late in most parts of the world.

Odart, a Piedmontese conspirator for Catharine, used to say, "I see there is no regard for any thing but money, and money I will have. I would go this night and set fire to the palace for money; and when I had got enough, I would retire to my own country, and there live like an honest man." More than once the Empress offered him a title: "No, Madam, I thank you," said Odart; "money, money, if you please."

He did get money, went to Nice, and there he is said to have lived as became a gentleman.

Since this over-estimate of wealth is almost universal, it can be no wonder that the rich are so vain and the poor so envious. I know that it is only repeating the tritest of common-places to observe that both exaggerate its advantages.

"I read upon the brows of those who live in idle show,
That fortune sells the gifts which men believe her to
bestow."

It must, however, be owned, that the greatest are willing enough to consider the humblest as their fellow-creatures, when they stand in need of their help. A prince in danger of being drowned would not wonder at being saved by the *humanity* of a common sailor; and a general, before a battle, addresses his "*brave fellow-soldiers*." Indeed many persons do the poor the honour of expecting them to be spotless. Too often is it deemed a good excuse for refusing them alms that they have failings like our own.

There are many advantages in this variety of conditions, one of which is boasted of by a divine, who rejoices that, between both classes, "all the holidays of the Church are properly kept; since the rich observe the feasts, and the poor observe the fasts."

To be more serious, it is fortunate for the Christian world that our public worship tends at once to abase the proud, and to uplift the dejected; while a similar effect results in a free country from its elections, where the haughtiest are obliged to go hat in hand begging favours from the lowliest. Nor should the lofty be ashamed, for it has so happened that the benefactors of the human race have been poor men; such as Socrates and Epaminondas; such as many of the most illustrious Romans, and the inspired founders of our faith.

Among the North American Indians a wish for wealth is even now considered as unworthy of a brave man, and the chief is often the poorest man of the tribe.

Mr. Burke says truly, "The people maintain the government, and not the government the people. The rich are the pensioners of the poor. They are under an absolute hereditary and indefeasible dependence on those

who labour. That class of dependent pensioners called 'the rich' is so extremely small, that if their throats were cut, all they consume in a year would not give a bit of bread and cheese for one night's supper to those who labour."

Bossuet, in one of his best sermons, has the following characteristic passages :

" Je dis donc, ô riches du siècle ; que vous avez tort de traiter les pauvres avec mépris : nous trouverions peut-être, si nous voulions monter à l'origine des choses, qu'ils n'auroient pas moins de droit que vous aux biens que vous possédez. Non, non, ô riches, ce ne'st pas pour vous seuls, que Dieu fait lever son soleil, ni qu'il arrose la terre, ni qu'il fait profiter dans son sein une si grande diversité de semences : les pauvres y ont leur part aussi bien que vous. J'avoue que Dieu ne leur a donné aucun fonds en propriété, mais il leur a assigné leur subsistence sur vos biens.

" Quelle gloire, en vérité, chrétiens, si nous la savions bien comprendre ! Par conséquent, bien loin de les mépriser, vous les devriez respecter, les considérant comme les personnes que Dieu vous adresse et vous recommande. Vive Dieu ! dit le Seigneur, (c'est jurer par moi-même) le ciel et la terre et tout ce qu'ils renferment est à moi. Vous êtes obligé de me rendre la redevance de tous vos biens, mais certes, pour moi, je n'ai que faire ni de vos offrandes, ni de vos richesses ; je suis votre Dieu et n'ai pas besoin de vos biens. Je ne peux souffrir de nécessité qu'en la personne des pauvres qui j'avoue pour mes enfans : c'est à eux que j'ordonne que vous payiez, fidèlement, le tribut que vous me devez. Que si on les refuse, si on les maltraite, il

n'entend pas qu'ils portent leurs plaintes par devant des juges mortels: lui même il écouterà leurs cris du plus haut des cieus; comme ce qu'il est dû aux pauvres, ce sont ses propres daniens, il en a réservé la connoissance à son tribunal. C'est moi qui les vengerai, dit-il: je ferai miséricorde à ceux qui leur ferai miséricorde, je serai impitoyable à qui sera impitoyable pour eux.

“Merveilleuse dignité des pauvres! la grace, la miséricorde, le pardon est entre leurs mains: et il y a des personnes assez insensées pour les mépriser!”

There is, notwithstanding, so little danger that the indigent will be made supercilious by such considerations that it is needless to remind them of the disadvantages of their condition. The twofold danger of being starved both by hunger and by cold is enough; but there is another inferiority, which it is most painful to reflect upon. It is this. When a child is taken from an opulent mother, she comforts herself by saying, “I thank God that all that could be done has been done to save it;” but the grief of a poor woman is heightened into agony by the belief that a physician and proper attendance might have preserved her little one. Such thoughts are the harder to bear, because the social affections of the needy are necessarily cherished by the habit of doing those humble services to each other which are rendered to the rich by their menials; and perhaps this necessity alone may counteract the inevitable and therefore pardonable selfishness arising from scanty subsistence.

Upon the whole, there can be no doubt that inequality of condition is so much more seeming than real, as to suggest unanswerable dissuaves from envy

and discontent, as well as from hard-heartedness and vainglory.

If the difficulty can be surmounted of persuading the poor to be contented with their portion in this world, there will be little or no trouble in overcoming the reluctance of the rich to prefer their larger share.

ON WAR.

So much has been well said against war, that it has the air of a plagiarius when any of its unavoidable evils are alluded to.

Yet there is a short passage, in Dr. Aikin's Life of Howard the philanthropist, placing one of them in so striking a light, that it must excite the most painful reflections in a reader of common humanity.

In one of his benevolent journeys, he writes from Moscow, that "no less than 70,000 recruits for the army and navy have died in the Russian hospitals during a single year."

He was an accurate man, incapable of saying any thing but the truth, and therefore this horrible fact cannot but heighten our detestation both of war and of despotism. It has, however, been scarcely spoken of in Europe; while other hateful crimes, though affecting only individuals, have justly become the perpetual objects of pity and indignation. For instance, the cruel murders of the Princesse de Lamballe and of Louis the Sixteenth.

The truth is, that despotism is ever destroying its millions silently and unnoticed; while sedition is generally tumultuous, and always dreaded and detested. So many are interested in painting exaggerated pictures of its mischiefs, that the world is kept in perpetual alarm, and even the writers themselves become unable to judge

impartially between oppression and resistance ; as an artist is said to have drawn the devil so hideous that he lost his senses by looking at his own colours.

There are few riots without some grievance. "Jupiter," says Lucian, "seldom has recourse to his thunder, but when he is in the wrong;" and, at the close of a long military life, Monsieur de Vendome owned that, "in the eternal disputes between the mules and the muleteers, the mules were generally in the right."

All our praise-worthy toil and expense, in building infirmaries and asylums, cannot save a hundredth part of the lives, nor alleviate a hundredth part of the afflictions brought upon the human race by one unnecessary war. "Next to the calamity of losing a battle is that of gaining a victory," is reported to have been said by our great commander, on the evening of the bloody day of Waterloo.

It is, therefore, much to be lamented that so many persons of influence are benefited by war, as the tolls at Cork are raised by the slaughtering season. Alas ! "Multis utile bellum !"

Great conquerors are curses on mankind while they live ; and, when they die, they leave no relics like the skins of their predecessors, I had almost said their ancestors, the wolves and bears.

How easily are the silly victims deluded ! What a humiliating picture of human life is exhibited in the hand-bills usually stuck up all over London ! "All aspiring heroes, who wish to serve their king and country, defend the protestant religion, and live for ever, may receive ten shillings and sixpence by applying at the Britannia public-house in Wapping." Such temptations,

who can withstand ! Fame, future happiness, and half a guinea !

Since statesmen complain so much of what they call " declamation," why will they render it so easy and so unanswerable ?

In one of Foote's farces, Dr. Last asks boastingly, " Have you heard of my *black powder* ?" As if he had been the discoverer of so famous a medicine, though all the state-quacks, since the invention of artillery, have been as fond and as proud too of the doctor's prescription.

ON INTOLERANCE AND BIGOTRY.

The crime of intolerance is not only hateful, but so ridiculous, that many of its absurdities are scarcely credible.

The Chancelier de l'Hôpital was called an *atheist*, because he refused to be a persecutor: Galileo for thinking the earth turns round: Descartes for saying there are innate ideas: Gassendi and Locke for denying them. Father Hardouin proved, very much to his own satisfaction, that Malebranche, Pascal, Arnaud and Nicole, (the most pious of men,) would certainly be damned. The mother of Louis XIV. was shocked by the notion that Jansenists might be saved, and cried out, "Ah! fi! fi! de la Grace." In Hispaniola, some Spaniards made a vow to sacrifice every day twelve Indians in honour of the twelve apostles. When Savoy and Geneva exchanged a village or two, Geneva engaged to tolerate the catholic inhabitants for *twenty-five years*! If the Mahometans conclude a treaty of peace with Christians, they forthwith proceed to the mosque, and ask pardon of God Almighty for discontinuing to cut the throats of his children, on whom they imprecate calamities. Now it is unfortunately, or fortunately true, that curses are seldom quite ineffectual, inasmuch as they have a tendency to bring down well-merited punishments on the heads of those who pray that evils may fall on others. But there would be no end of enumerating these weak and wicked creeds and practices.

It has been asked by a great author—"What does it signify, whether you deny a God or speak ill of him?" A question well answered by another sage, when he declares, "I would rather men should say, that there never was such a man as Plutarch, than that Plutarch was an ill-natured, mischievous fellow."

A most affecting instance of a contrary way of thinking is found in the pious poet Cowper's belief that "somewhere in infinite space there is a world beyond the province of mercy," and that he himself had been selected as an example of the Almighty's sovereign power and indisputable right "to do what he pleased with his creatures" in dooming him to everlasting misery, though not the very worst of human beings. Perhaps there is not another known case of so heart-rending an illusion.

Yet bigotry is just as amiable and as respectable in her indulgences as in her severities, in her partialities as in her persecutions. She deified most of the Roman emperors, and she has graced the calendar of saints with the names of many disgusting fools and villains.

The Scythians reasoned well when pursued by the would-be son of Jupiter Ammon, that "he who did so much harm to men could not be divine." Their inference, however, has been carried too far by the African people, who were of opinion that "God is too good to require that his creatures should pray to him for blessings," and therefore they worshipped only the evil spirits.

There can be no reasonable doubt that it is better to believe too much than too little, since, as Boswell observes, (most probably in Johnson's words,) "a man may breathe in foul air, but he must die in an exhausted receiver."

Much of the scepticism that we meet with is necessarily affectation or conceit, for it is as likely that the ignorant, weak, and indolent, should become mathematicians as reasoning unbelievers. Patient study and perfect impartiality must precede rational conviction, whether ending in faith or in doubt. Need it be asked how many are capable of such an examination? But whether men come honestly by their opinions or not, it is more advisable to refute than to burn, or even to scorch them.

ON THE PASSIONS.

I have heard that a gentleman, to whom an estate had been bequeathed, called up his servants and addressed them thus :—"Ladies and gentlemen ! I hope you will have the goodness to remember that I have got only one more estate of one thousand pounds per annum, and I beg that every one of you will not be spending at that rate."

Something like this should be said of our different appetites, for the consequence of freely indulging all, would be ruinous to body, mind, and fortune. Yet each must be moderately satisfied, since gratifying one alone would be like giving food to a single head of Cerberus, making the others only more voracious.

Such, notwithstanding, is the complicated constitution of human nature, that a man, without a predominant inclination, is not likely to be either useful or happy.

"Chrysologue est tout et n'est rien." He who is every thing is nothing, is as true of our sensitive as of our intellectual nature. He is rather a bundle of little likings than a compact and energetic individual. A strong desire soon subdues all the weaker, and rules us with the united force of all that it subjugates.

Vivid perceptions and intense feelings have, sometimes, a sort of fascination, compelling us to rush headlong into danger ; as in the delirious giddiness caused by looking down a frightful precipice. Action so commonly

follows lively sensation that the habit becomes inveterate, and, now and then, irresistible, even when certainly fatal. Any desire, suffered to rule uncontrolled, quickly gains this terrible ascendancy, and even madness itself is, sometimes, only outrageous selfishness.

Such being the force of human feelings, it must embitter our daily lives if our employments are unsuited to our talents and wishes; yet, how few, alas! are so fortunate as to be gaining either wealth or fame while gratifying an inclination.

The well known doctrine of a master-passion is only an exaggeration of the fact, as displayed in the characters of most persons, and especially of those who have warm constitutions.

It is therefore of great importance to watch the growth of such a powerful despot in ourselves and in others, if we hope to govern or to understand either. Yet it is, in truth, surprising how few are sufficiently acquainted with themselves to see, distinctly, what their own motives actually are. It is a rare as well as a great advantage for a man to know his own mind.

If we attend to what is going on, we have, at first, a voice in choosing our own sovereign; for the monarchy, though absolute, is elective, and much indeed does it concern us to choose our ruler wisely.

Ambition and vanity are hard taskmasters, and it is only to our home-bred affections that we must trust for real pleasures. The world tempts and disappoints; first makes us thirsty and then gives us bitter water to drink. Even when defeated and mortified, the social feelings are not wholly unpleasing, for the French actress's exclamation, while speaking of an unfaithful lover's once

deserting her, was quite natural. "Ah! c'était le ton ton ! j'étois bien malheureuse." No colours are so gay as those reflected by the clouds that have passed away.

It cannot be denied, that our warmest emotions, though subjecting us to innumerable temptations, have many countervailing benefits. Though all the passions are subtle sophists, and ever justify themselves, yet they are not without their use in our mental improvement, since, probably more prejudices are removed by passion than by philosophy. Temper too, even ill-temper, is more frank and honest than a calm, calculating self-love; or, at least, it puts others on their guard, by exhibiting the character plainly, as an insect shown in a microscope.

Of the generous impulses, it is needless to point out the merits. They are, luckily, felt in all conditions of life. Admiration, for instance, is found in all, especially in unspoiled youth, and in the unambitious common people. What a simultaneous burst of applause from pit, box, and gallery, instantly follows a magnanimous deed or sentiment! "*Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur,*" says a most discerning, self-taught, man of the world.

In the voluptuous and self-indulgent vices, there is often some mixture of kindness, some little regard to others; but the vain, too commonly, and the ambitious, always, are purely selfish, admitting of no partners in success, and hating their dearest friends, should such, unfortunately, happen to be their competitors for fame and power. She must be an antiquated beauty who can hear with perfect pleasure a compliment paid to her own daughter's rival charms, and no aspiring public man can "bear a brother near the throne."

All solitary enjoyments quickly pall, or become painful, so that, perhaps, no more insufferable misery can be conceived than that which must follow incommunicable privileges. Only imagine a human being condemned to perpetual youth, while all around him decay and die ! Oh ! how sincerely he would call upon death for deliverance ! No means of suicide would be left unattempted.

What, then, is to be done ? Are we to struggle against all our natural desires ? Luckily we should strive in vain ; or, could we succeed, what fools should we be for our pains !

There is no need to extinguish the fertility of the soil, lest the harvest should be unwholesome. Is it not better, far, to root up the weeds, and to plant fruits and flowers instead ? Were but a tithe of the time and the thought, usually spent in learning the commonest accomplishments, bestowed upon regulating our lives, how many evils would be avoided or lessened ! how many pleasures would be created or increased !

ON POLITICAL AGITATIONS.

A French gentleman said to Monsieur Colbert—"You found the state-carriage overturned on one side, and you have overturned it on the other." This was probably untrue, but it must be confessed, that there is always some danger of destroying institutions by unskilful or violent changes. A conflagration may be extinguished without a deluge.

It is not only hard to distinguish between too little and too much, but between the good and evil intentions of the different reformers. One man calls out "Fire," that he may save the house; another, that he may run away with the furniture.

I am inclined to believe, that in revolutions, more harm is done by hurry and self-conceit, than by mischievous purposes. Very few indeed should presume to lay their hands on the Ark, but

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread;"

and unluckily,

"A down-hill reformation rolls apace."

When honest men infer from their desire to do good, that they have the knowledge and talents requisite to govern wisely, it is incalculable what evil-doers they

may innocently become ! What an eternal shock of purposes where each man pursues his own crude schemes, with all the obstinacy of self-satisfied integrity ! Yet to leave serious grievances imperfectly redressed, or indisputable improvements unattained, merely through a vague apprehension of innovation, is at once a great and a common evil. There is much truth in Bacon's complaint, " That some men object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home."

Even moderation itself may sometimes be folly or cowardice. On the Exclusion-bill being opposed in the house of commons, Colonel Titus exclaimed both wisely and eloquently. " We are advised to be moderate ; but I do not take moderation to be a prudential virtue in all cases. If I were flying from thieves, should I ride moderately, lest I break my horse's wind ? If I were defending my own life or the lives of my wife and children, should I strike moderately, lest I put myself out of breath ? And if, Mr. Speaker, we were in a sinking ship, (no unapt representation of our decaying commonwealth,) ought we to pump moderately, lest we bring on a fever ?"

Gradual improvements, notwithstanding, are not only safer but better than sudden ones, and more, much more, may be learnt from their example, when well recorded : but history is addicted to dwell on the latter, and rarely investigates the former. Their effects also are more permanent and more extensive ; anarchy being only the stakeholder for tyranny. There is, besides, something more terrible to the imagination in the disorderly violences of the multitude, than in the organised oppression

of a despot ; something more hideous in myriads of reptiles, than in a gigantic beast of prey. If there were no alternative but either the absolute government of St. Giles's, or of St. James's, who in his senses could hesitate a moment which to prefer ?

Besides its other innumerable benefits, a really representative government has the advantage of exempting individual persons from the necessity of becoming political agitators ; and, by increasing the competition while it diminishes the rewards, it lessens the numbers of those who can be advanced in reputation or in fortune by office. The young people of this country, in every rank, from a peer's son to a street-sweeper's, are drawn aside from a praiseworthy exertion in honest callings, by having their eyes directed to the public treasure. The rewards of persevering industry are too slow for them, too small, and too insipid. They fondly trust to the great lottery, although the wheel contains so many blanks and so few prizes ; hoping that their ticket may be drawn a place, a pension, or a contract, a living, or a stall, a ship, or a regiment, a seat on the bench, or the great seal.

It is, indeed, most humiliating to witness the indecent scramble that is always going on for these prizes, the highest born and best educated rolling in the dirt, to pick them up, just as the lowest of the mob do for the shillings or the pence thrown among them by a successful candidate at a contested election.

ON VISITING-ACQUAINTANCE.

A lady complaining that her shoes were burst on the first day of wearing them, the shoemaker exclaimed, "What wonder? why your ladyship actually walked in them."

It is not unusual to hear lamentations, as unreasonable as the lady's, from simple people, who have been disappointed in expecting aid or sympathy from those whom the courtesy of the world calls "friends." None but the inexperienced look for real services from merely fashionable connections. They are like roughly painted pictures, to be kept at a distance. It is understood, that people are to be charmed with each other, just so long as it is amusing to meet, but not an hour longer. Adversity not only lowers people's spirits and renders friends dull, but too often it has the unpardonable effect of taking away the means of receiving others in return.

The friendships of the world lie chiefly in frequent visits and in joint subscriptions to a club, or to an opera-box, but as for the mutual self-sacrifices, so delicious to heartfelt affection, it is perfectly ridiculous to rely upon such things from such persons or to cry out when they are refused. "*Nam illæ ambitiosæ fucosæque amicitiae sunt in quodam splendore forensi, fructum domesticum non habent.*"* Who does not know how much, or how

* For these false and complimentary friendships make a show of civility in public: they yield no domestic fruit.

little is meant, when a correspondent signs himself "your humble servant," and assures you that "he is ever most faithfully yours!"

The fate of those whose talents raise them suddenly to reputation, is particularly hard. The blaze of a successful first appearance, on the stage, or in parliament, attracts the eyes of all the world. The very domestic ladies, who delight in being "at home," immediately throw open their doors to the petted, and, too often, the spoiled child of the season. The vogue lasts throughout the spring, and then "farewell," perhaps, "for ever" to the shower of flattering notes and pressing invitations. This is bad enough in the world, but the deserted dupes are often most to be blamed, who mistake notoriety for fame, and curiosity for affection.

Indeed, there are many respectable persons well worth knowing, because their manners towards us mark precisely the actual degree of our fashion at any given moment, and is not this being of use? Have we not in them those magical mirrors which show us what is passing in other places?

There is, to speak seriously, another complaint, truly unreasonable. How frequently do we hear severe, yet unmerited reflections on those, who, in consequence of a change of residence, or of pursuits, naturally drop the acquaintance of old associates! Perhaps business may rob them of their leisure; perhaps they may have lost their health or their incomes; perhaps they have given up drawing, and have taken to music; or they have entered into another political party. With the similarity of habits and opinions, it is plain, that the desire to meet must also be lost. Even a long absence may have

greatly altered the nature of the connection between two persons sincerely attached. They have untold secrets, new alliances, new fancies, new sentiments. They have to point out to each other every thing about them, as they show the town to a stranger. Yet a true friend it is shameful to forget ; but mere acquaintances may be as innocently changed as our studies, occupations, or amusements.

To do mankind justice, it must be owned, that such mortified feelings, as have been alluded to, are seldom expressed when they who give us up have declined in their circumstances, or in their fashion. It is those who rise that are regretted and abused.

ON A VOICE.

INTENDED FOR A PERIODICAL PAPER PROJECTED
IN 1800—BY SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

There are few natural gifts which may not be turned to profitable use. A well-known person has always gained his living solely by his voice. He once owned that his mother told him (though he generally was too busy in talking himself to listen to others) that he had begun, while in arms, to tyrannise over the whole family by his cries and screams. A maiden aunt always complained that nobody else could be heard in the house, while he was awake; nay, his noisy mode of sleeping often deprived his little brothers and sisters of their natural rest.

His parents being poor, he was set to frighten away the crows from the newly-sown corn lands; and he then got the two offices of common-crier and counter-tenor in the cathedral, serving at the same time both church and state. The former he deserted for a short time, having turned field-preacher; but he soon became worldly again, turning his dinners and evening enjoyments by singing at taverns and ale-houses; yet he always declared, that he got more by his piano manner than by his forte. Whispering at morning-calls and at tea-tables did more for him, a long time, than voting or shouting at elections; though, in the end, he was greatly advanced by his success in the latter. His great merits, both in can-

vassing, and in loud speaking on the hustings, procured for him, unexpectedly, a seat in parliament; where his incessant cheers, (friendly or hostile,) his readiness to speak against time, and his well-timed calls to order, but above all, his audible pronunciation of the two monosyllables, "aye," and "no," quickly made his fortune. He was knighted on being chosen to deliver a corporation address to his majesty, when passing through the borough.

Now he lives in honourable retirement, swearing impartially at friends and foes. In short, he would have been perfectly happy, if he had not been haunted by a perpetual alarm, lest an asthma, or some disease of the trachea, should reduce him to poverty and insignificance.

"Tot rerum vox una fuit."

NATURE AND UTILITY OF ELOQUENCE.

READ IN THE MANCHESTER SOCIETY, NOVEMBER 2, 1787,
AND PRINTED IN THEIR MEMOIRS.

"Fructu, et populari estimatione, Sapientia Eloquentiæ cedit. Ita enim Salomon, *sapiens corde appellabitur prudens, sed dulcis eloquiæ majora reperiet*; haud obscure innuens, Sapientiam famam quandam, et admirationem culpam conciliare, at in rebus gerendis et vita communi, eloquentiam præcipue esse efficacem."

BACON, DE AUGM. SCIEN., LIB. VI. CAP. 3.

I must hope to be forgiven, for owning that I consider myself as running some risk in venturing to solicit the attention of the society, when I have nothing to offer but a few thoughts concerning such a kind of subject as Eloquence. Generally prevalent as the study of natural philosophy is, at present, in this kingdom, and particularly cultivated as this science has been by so many of the most eminent members of the society, I should be somewhat surprised if the philosophy of the fine arts were held in much estimation. I never could, and I hope I never shall, allow myself to speak or think disrespectfully of other men's pursuits, merely because they differ from mine; but surely I may be permitted to say, that the study of that grand and seducing science, Natural Philosophy, has a tendency to excite in its followers low ideas of arts as useful as any that can be founded even

upon its noblest discoveries. It is true, that in distinguishing the arts from each other, the fine arts have been usually opposed to the useful; but is not this improper? and would it not be better to consider them as divided into the liberal and the mechanical? Had I thought eloquence to be a fine art only, in the common sense of that term, I should, in the first instance, have probably saved myself the trouble of thinking or writing about it all; but, in the second, I should certainly have spared the society the trouble of reading what I had written. Eloquence, so far as it is an art, is undoubtedly classed with propriety among the fine arts; since the means it uses to effect its purposes are not mechanical, and inasmuch as it is so constantly connected with the strongest exercises of the imagination; but surely it can never be excluded from an eminent place among the useful arts, so long as men have prejudices to be attacked, fears to be allayed, hopes to be excited, or passions to be moved; and so long, it may be added, as they have understandings to be informed. For, perhaps, the most extensive field for the display of real ability in speaking is the rich, the vast, and hitherto imperfectly cultivated tract of *probable evidence*.

Within the sphere of demonstration, indeed, eloquence has but little to do, having only room enough to exhibit two of her lowest qualities, perspicuity and order: but demonstration, though absolute so far as her power extends, reigns over a very narrow territory. I will not presume to go quite so far as D'Alembert, and say of eloquence, "Les prodiges qu'elle opere, souvent, entre les mains d'un seul, sur toute une nation, sont peut-être le témoignage le plus éclatant de la supériorité d'un

homme sur un autre ;”* but still, that art which teaches us how we are likely, in the most effectual manner, to make ourselves masters of other men’s minds by speech, must be permitted to rank very highly in the scale of useful studies.

It has, in truth, been common with those men of sense who have themselves been deficient in expression, to speak with contempt of the eloquence of others, and to represent it as useless at least, if not highly dangerous ; nay, some men have very dexterously and successfully used the art itself to decry its importance, and vilify its tendency.† “Quod sit indignissimum,” says Quintilian ; “in accusationem orationis, utuntur orandi viribus.” “Unbecoming as it is, the power of eloquence is employed in her own accusation.”

“It is evident,” says Mr. Locke, “how men love to deceive, and be deceived ; since rhetoric, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publicly taught, and has always been had in great reputation.” “What is the end of eloquence,” says Warburton in the chapter already referred to, “but to stifle reason, and inflame passions ?” The prejudices of Mr. Locke were undoubtedly honest, but they plainly show that he mistook the abuse of the art for the art

* Discours préliminaire à l’Encyclopédie. “The extraordinary effects, which, in the hands of a single individual, it often produces upon a whole nation, are perhaps the most striking evidence of the superiority of one man over another.”

† The instances of this self-condemning censure are very numerous ; but there are few examples of it so remarkable, or so entertaining, as a long passage in Plato’s *Gorgias*, and another in the ninth chapter of Warburton’s *Doctrine of Grace*.

itself; and happily for mankind, Bacon's observation is true: "No man can well speak fair of things sordid and base, but in things honest it is an easy matter to be eloquent." To the bishop's authority it may be objected, as Thucydides says it was to Cleon's, "that because he used to hold the bad side in the causes he pleaded, therefore he was ever inveighing against eloquence and good speech." It were easy to multiply the examples of such misrepresentations; the sophists and the fathers of old, the metaphysicians and theologians of late, have united in abusing an art which they wanted judgment as well as taste to understand. Yet in all the various instances of these inconsiderate attacks, it ever appeared to me, that the objections and censures constantly arose from a misconception of the real nature of the art.

"Tis poor eloquence," says Sir J. Reynolds, "that only shows a man can talk."

How often is the epithet "eloquent" applied to some ignorant coxcomb, who in every gesture, look, and word, offends against the first rudiments of speaking, forgetting "*ars est celare artem*!" How many times must every man have heard the title of "orator" given to some wretched phrase-monger, whose skill consisted only in the frequent use of a gaudy word, or an affected antithesis! Thus has this efficacious and important art become disreputable; and, of course, disregarded by many great and wise men, even among those whose professions are connected with the daily practice of public speaking. But this misconception is far from being peculiar to those who have not attended to the subject; for perhaps it is hardly possible to produce any definitions of rhetoric from the ancient, and there are but few to be found in

modern writings, which do not either lay it open to just objections, or degrade its importance by confining its powers and its application.

It cannot but have been matter of some surprise to such as are conversant with the works of the most celebrated rhetoricians, that they should differ so generally and so widely respecting the nature of the art which they profess to teach. In the fifteenth chapter of his second book, Quintilian states and refutes a great variety of different definitions, which, even in his time, had been given of rhetoric; and he censures, among others, those that rested on the authority of names no less eminent than Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. He then proceeds to express and support his own opinion; but less skilfully and less successfully than he had attacked the sentiments of his predecessors. The same irreconcilable variety of opinion prevails among later writers on this subject; which, to say the truth, has been considered by so many able authors, and by some of such exalted reputation, that I choose to mention this difference among them, as an apology for presuming to go over the ground which such men have trodden. Since all cannot be right where all disagree, the authority of one serves to counterbalance that of another; and thus a man may be allowed to differ from any of them, without dreading the imputation of vanity. "*Il faut, dans tous les arts, se donner bien de garde de ces définitions trompeuses, par lesquelles nous osons exclure toutes les beautés, qui nous sont inconnues, ou que la coutume n'a point encore rendues familières.*"*—Volt. sur le Poème Epique.

* It is necessary, in every art, to beware of those deceptive definitions, by which we allow ourselves to ex-

Aristotle says, it is the office of rhetoric—"Not to persuade, but to discern whatever is fitted to induce persuasion."—Rhet., Lib. I. c. I.

"But the office of this faculty appears to be, to adopt a discourse to the purpose of persuasion."—Cicero de Inven., Lib. I. s. 5.

"For eloquence is nothing else than wisdom discoursing fluently."—Cicero Orat. Part. s. 22.

"The science of speaking well."—Quin., Lib. II. cap. 15.

"The most usual definition of rhetoric is, therefore, the *power of persuasion*. This opinion originated with Isocrates: Plato likewise says almost the same thing."—Quin., Lib. II. cap. 15.

"Eloquence is the talent of impressing forcibly upon the minds of others, and infusing into them with rapidity, the deep feeling in which you are absorbed."—D'Alembert, sur l'Elocution Oratoire.

"Eloquence is the power of speaking with fluency and elegance."—Dr. Johnson's Dictionary.

"Eloquence is the art of speaking or writing well, so as to move and persuade."—Chambers's Cyclopædia.

This is but a small sample of the various modes of speaking concerning the subject; but no more need be produced, and to me all these appear either false or imperfect. Perhaps the most sensible, most substantial, and most useful idea of eloquence, is that expressed by Dr. Campbell in the first sentence of his *PHILOSOPHY OF RHETORIC*: "Eloquence is that art or talent by which a

clude all beauties, which we do not appreciate, or which custom has not yet rendered familiar.

discourse is adapted to its end." The same sentiment is intimated by Quintilian, when he says, "The more a man *effects* by speaking, the more he *speaks* according to the method of eloquence."* Fenelon, the best of all critics, in his Dialogues of the Dead, represents Demosthenes as saying to Cicero, "You made people say: How well he speaks! I made them say: Come! let us march against Philip." "Whatever composition," says Mr. Wilkes, in one of his speeches, "produces the effect which is intended, in the most forcible manner, is, in my opinion, the best, and most to be approved. That mode should always be pursued: it has the most merit, as well as the most success, on the great theatre of the world, no less than on the stage, whether you mean to inspire pity, terror, or any other passion." It may, perhaps, be objected, that the word eloquence has generally been used in a more limited sense; and, to say the truth, it has by many been applied to denote ornamental composition only: but has not this arisen from a mistake, by which a part of the art has been taken for the whole? This has been the case with poetry, and it is amusing to observe the difficulties into which the error has brought many learned men, in their attempts to settle the nature and essential qualities of this noble art. Some have thought its nature to consist in imagery, some in imitation, some in fiction, some in metre, and others in passion; whereas these are only so many different means employed by the poet to effect his purposes, and are all mere parts of that of which it has been supposed they constitute the essence. However, let the common mean-

* Lib. XII. cap. 10.

ing of the term be what it may, we are not now considering the proper acceptation of a word, but the real nature of a serious art. The existence of such an art can hardly be doubted, for that would be to question whether men speak best by accident or by design, when they take no thought, or when they previously consider what they are about to do. Nature, it must be confessed does much, and will not only lead but compel us, on interesting occasions, to use those forms of speech (even the most complex) which rhetoricians have arranged and named. Perhaps no language is more *natural* than that which abounds with figure and allusion. Yet still ability alone is not sufficient; and a living man, of high rank in politics, might be pointed out, who, though gifted far beyond any of his contemporaries, and greatly superior to them in acquirements, has yet been often found a useless and sometimes a dangerous auxiliary, because he wanted the skill to manage his prodigious powers. He is ever saying something only for the sake of saying it; merely because it is singular, beautiful, or sublime, and without any regard to its effect on his auditors. A real thought he never can dismiss, till he has made it the subject of innumerable comparisons, or darkened it by superabundant illustration. If it be possible for such a waste of talents to be occasioned by a deficiency in the art we are speaking of, it may not be amiss to consider whether the definition of it given by Dr. Campbell be the true one, and, at the same time, to examine the opinions of the other celebrated writers, whose definitions I have quoted, as they are maintained and defended by two authors of great reputation, and of peculiar abilities for the discussion of such a subject, Dr. Browne and Dr. Leland, both

of whom have stated their sentiments at length ; the former in his *ESSAY ON RIDICULE*, and the latter in his *DISSERTATION ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN ELOQUENCE*.

Dr. Browne speaks thus : "As eloquence is of a vague, unsteady nature, merely relative to the imaginations and passions of mankind ; so there must be several orders and degrees of it, subordinate to each other in dignity, yet each perfect in its kind. The common *end* of each is persuasion : the means are different, according to the various capacities, fancies, and affections of those whom the artist attempts to persuade. The pathetic orator, who throws a congregation of enthusiasts into tears and groans, would raise affections of a very different nature, should he attempt to proselyte an English parliament. As, on the other hand, the finest speaker that ever commanded the house would in vain point the thunder of his eloquence on a Quaker meeting."—*Essay on Ridicule*, sect. 3, p. 32.

Of this passage, Dr. Leland says, "This is plausibly and ingeniously urged ; but the whole argument is founded on the supposition that eloquence and persuasion are one and the same, and that to be denominated an orator, no more is necessary than to influence and move the hearer : a supposition which cannot be admitted, however witty men may have talked of the 'eloquence of *silence*,' or the 'eloquence of *nonsense*.' ['Persuadent enim dicendo,' saith Quintilian ; 'vel ducunt in id quod volunt, alii quoque meretrices, adulatores, corruptores.' Lib. II. cap. 16.] The alluring accents of an harlot move the sensualist ; the abject and extravagant praises of a flatterer move the vain man ; and the plain promise of a large reward, expressed without trope or figure, may have the

greatest power over the conduct of a traitor or an assassin. But it will by no means follow that the harlot, the flatterer, or the suborner, is *eloquent*. To merit this praise, a man must persuade (if he does persuade) by the real excellences, the engaging and conciliating qualities of speech. Accordingly, Aristotle tells us it is the office of rhetoric, 'to perceive whatever is adapted to persuasion in every case.' So that the doctor's orator, who throws a congregation of enthusiasts into tears and groans, is, in reality, no orator at all, because he owes his influence, not to clearness and strength of reasoning, not to dignity of sentiment, force or elegance of expression, and the like, but to senseless exclamation, unmeaning rhapsody; or to grimace, to a sigh, to a rueful countenance; and if he would in vain endeavour to proselyte an English parliament, it is for this very reason, because he is no orator, nor can any man without any one of the *apposita*, the rational excellences and engaging qualities of speech, be said to possess a degree of eloquence perfect in its kind."—Leland's Dissertation, ch. 14.

What Leland says of Browne's may be as justly said of his own argument, that it is plausibly and ingeniously urged; but probably the opinion of neither is true. Although it may be acknowledged that "eloquence is relative to the imaginations and passions of men," yet it does not therefore follow that it is of a "vague, unsteady nature." It might as justly be said, that the art of music is of a vague, unsteady nature, because it produces compositions so infinitely various; or that the art of the painter is liable to the same reflection, because it is sometimes exercised on copper and sometimes on canvass. The arts themselves are fixed, steady, and immutable; it is only

the objects on which they operate that are various and perishable. Neither is it true that the *only end* of all eloquence is persuasion. An orator undoubtedly often aims to persuade, but he generally has some other end in view. He frequently wishes to alarm, to rouse, to depress, to excite our pity, or to fire our indignation, and sometimes is only desirous to delight the imagination. Now these different objects can never be reduced under the general head of persuasion, without departing most unwarrantably from the common acceptation of that term. The ingenious instances adduced in the last sentence of the quotation from Browne, are certainly not sufficient to prove either of his positions: namely, that eloquence is of a vague, unsteady nature, or that the common end of all eloquent discourses is persuasion. The answer just given to the principles themselves, will also destroy the application of these instances. And, in truth, the facts which he takes notice of may be accounted for in a much more reasonable and unobjectionable manner.

That the Methodist preacher would produce no other effect in parliament but that of making himself ridiculous, is unquestionable; and why? Because, in attempting to affect the house, by the use of the same means as those that are successful in his own pulpit, he would cease to be eloquent. He would be violating one of the fundamental rules of rhetoric, which teaches us, that a speaker ought to have a constant regard to the quality of his audience. His ill success, therefore, would be owing to his want of art. He would fail, because he was ineloquent. The eloquence which he had displayed on his own ground would still remain unimpeachable.

The same reasoning is just as applicable to the parlia-

mentary speaker, who should point the thunder of his eloquence on a quaker meeting. The thundering sort of eloquence would here be misapplied; and how many soever he might use of those conciliating qualities of speech which Leland speaks of, he would still be unsuccessful, because his speech would not be *ad homines*. Dr. Leland's remarks are truly sensible, and would not be liable to objection, if altered but a little. The addition to be recommended is a short explanation of what he means by those rational and real excellences, those conciliating qualities of speech, which he repeats as the basis of his reasoning. Had he been called upon for such an explanation, he would, I am persuaded, have expressed himself so as to deviate materially from the truth of the case. He would probably have said, that nature had at first suggested certain forms of speech, which rhetoricians had arranged and settled, and that these he meant to describe by the terms rational and real excellences, engaging and conciliating qualities. This others *have* said; and to such let it be answered, that perhaps the most common faults of all bad writing arise from this supposition, of something intrinsically excellent and eloquent in certain forms of speech, even when considered without any view to the effects which they are fitted to produce. Most writers, it must be confessed, employ tropes and figures because they *are* tropes and figures, and not because they are calculated to produce certain effects on the minds of their readers or hearers. The term conciliating is itself relative, and supposes somebody to be conciliated; and these conciliating qualities of speech must vary as much as the tempers and understandings of those who are to be conciliated. That

which is a conciliatory quality in a Methodist congregation is not so in parliament, and that which is so in parliament is not so in quaker meeting.

The grimaces and rueful exclamations, which Leland supposes are so effectual in a conventicle, are certainly more useful there than even his conciliating qualities and rational excellences of speech; but it is also true, that exclamations more pathetic, and gestures more natural, would be still more effectual, even in an assembly of enthusiasts; and the tears and groans produced by these grimaces only show the great advantage of appropriating and adapting both style and gesture, since he himself allows that these awkward attempts at adaptation have more effect than the most polite and splendid oration, if composed and delivered without any regard to the peculiarities of the audience. Yet although the variety of temper, intelligence, customs, opinions and prejudices, among mankind, is very great, there are at bottom certain leading principles, certain master-passions and prevailing prejudices, that all men have in common, which form the character of the species, and greatly overbalance all accidental and acquired differences. Variety of character is undoubtedly one of the characteristics of man, but similarity is a more important one. We all both resemble and differ from each other in countenance and form, as well as in the turn and quality of our minds. Just so it is in the art of eloquence; the kinds are as various as the kinds of men, and yet all arise from a few fixed and invariable principles; and no other forms of speech can deserve the names which Leland has given them, but such as are addressed to those qualities in human nature, which every perfect individual of the species is found to possess.

Such qualities there undoubtedly are ; and so far as we are all alike, so far are the rules of eloquence invariable, so far must a speaker's addresses to our understandings and tempers be in all cases the same. In what situation, or at what season, would it be wrong that the style should be proportioned to the subject, should be perspicuous in explanation, accurate in reasoning, decorated in giving delight, or animated in exciting passion ? That the opening of a speech should not betray insolence nor conceit ; that the narration should be intelligible ; that the arguments should be cogent ; that the arrangement should be advantageous ; that the expression should be suitable ; that the pronunciation should be varied and distinct ; these are not the precepts of one age or one country ; they are necessary to be observed at this time, as they were when Aristotle or Quintilian first inculcated them.

Instead, therefore, of concluding with Dr. Browne, that eloquence is of a vague, unsteady nature, or with Leland, that the enthusiast would fail because he is no orator, let these inferences be drawn—that eloquence is fixed on steady and unchangeable principles ; that it is exceedingly extensive in its use, and relates to every kind of discourse or speech that can be imagined ; that he who follows its precepts in one instance, is in that instance truly eloquent, however he may fail of success when attempting another kind of speaking, whether it be of a higher or lower degree ; and, in short, let Dr. Campbell's definition be thought the true one, when he says, that "eloquence is the art by which a discourse is adapted to its end." This definition solves all difficulties, explains, and, as it were, embodies all rules, and is the

grand axiom by which the propriety of every subordinate rhetorical precept must finally be tried. If such conclusions can be satisfactorily drawn from the foregoing thoughts, the examination of the subject has not been useless. For it is plainly of material consequence to be right in the first principles of a practical question, since real conduct in life and business cannot but be greatly affected by their truth or falsehood. He who thinks eloquence to be the art of deceiving, with Mr. Locke, will, if he be a good man, never study to be eloquent. He who thinks it is speaking ornamentally, will be speaking ornamentally when speaking plainly would be more efficacious. He will, most probably, be lavish of his tropes and figures, when these ambitious decorations should be shunned, or employed with the most sparing caution. He who thinks it consists in moving the passions, will often be weeping unaccompanied by the tears of his audience; and he who thinks it is the art of persuading, will not unfrequently be urgent when he ought to be instructive, or using vehement entreaties instead of powerful proofs. He, and he only, will not be cramped in the exercise of his art by the narrowness of his principles, who thinks it is the art of speaking and writing in such a manner as is most likely to obtain the ends which he proposes to himself in speaking or writing. Does he address the multitude? He will aim at being perspicuous, intelligible, and impassioned. Does he speak before men of learning, and such as are eloquent themselves? He will endeavour to be rational and concise. Does he desire to convince? He will reason. Does he wish to give delight? He will be copious, flowing, rich in imagery, and elegant in ex-

pression: nothing will be harsh, nothing careless, nothing unpolished or repulsive. Does he mean to agitate or persuade? He will be warm, animated, and glowing. He will arm himself with the thunders and lightnings of eloquence; or will speak in the mildest tone of insinuation, with "bated breath and whispering humbleness." In short, he will at all times accommodate himself to his situation; he will be

"Orpheus in the woods, Arion among dolphins."

Like Sylla, he will convert the trees of the academy into martial engines.

Yet this is not all his praise, for it is not only on public and solemn occasions that he will find opportunities to use his manifold skill—his eloquence is not only fitted for the bar, the pulpit, or the public assemblies of the state, but for the numberless interesting occurrences of private life, and may even descend to the narration of events, the composition of a letter, or the dexterous management of common conversation. To men who have lived in the world, and seen real affairs, the utility of such a varied, accommodating, and ready skill, cannot but be obviously apparent. It is thus spoken of by Lord Bacon, and is set down by him among the desiderata:—

"Surely it will not be amiss to recommend this whereof we now speak to a new enquiry, to call it by name, The wisdom of private speech, and to refer it to deficiencies; a thing certainly which the more seriously a man shall think of, the more highly he shall value. But setting aside the evident advantages arising from a superior ability in delivering one's sentiments on great occasions, and even omitting to lay any stress on the

obvious utility of the same skill when exerted in a man's private affairs; the pleasures that arise from fine writing are so great, so various, so often to be communicated, and so easy to be obtained, that this consideration alone would defend the art from the imputation of insignificance. For I can never be brought to believe that they are unprofitably employed, who are constantly increasing the daily pleasures of their fellow creatures; who can contrive, without corrupting men's minds, to divert and entertain them. Shall those be called unprofitable labours, which deliver a private man from the influence of his domestic anxieties; an artisan from the effects of his labour; a soldier from his sufferings; a statesman from his cares: which enable one man to forget his poverty, another his disease, a third his captivity, and all their misfortunes?"

Who are these severe judges that are ever insisting upon the exclusive excellence of the mechanical, commercial, or even philosophical employments; as if those employments were good for any thing, considered separately from the end which they aim at in common with works of imagination, "the promotion of happiness?" Are there any of them that tend more immediately to this great purpose? Which of them has more power to refine the manners, to soften the temper, to diffuse tranquillity and cheerfulness, to correct and enlarge the mind? Away, then, with such short-sighted objections, and let those that choose it prefer the man who makes a blade of grass grow where it grew not before, to the poet and the moralist who water the sickly seeds of virtue, and cause a rich harvest of good deeds to spring up from the unfriendly soil of a depraved or neglected heart.

TO MR. HORNE TOOKE.

21st October, 1792.

I have again gone through the "ΕΠΕΑ ΠΙΤΕΡΟ-ΕΝΤΑ" carefully, without once using an Englishman's most valuable privilege, the right of skipping; but I have read it a second time with much delight, and more advantage.

I at first supposed it to be a mere grammar, and did not suspect its being (what it truly is) a treatise on logic and metaphysics; yet I was already aware that languages are, really, analytic methods, and that, in learning the accident, we are learning to combine, abstract, and generalise. Without mentioning algebra or fluxions, the well-known fact that the *blind* can reason well respecting forms and colours, is a proof that words and characters are the chief, though not the only instruments of ratiocination. In the simpler cases of common life, I acknowledge the same to be true. Give any thing a name, and it is attended to, as when any peculiar tint has been christened, we learn to distinguish it, but not before.

It is scarcely possible to overrate either the hindrances arising from a clumsy and a confused notation, or the aid derived from one that is skilful and clear. La Place says, that the invention of logarithms has, in effect, lengthened the lives of astronomers; and Newton, long ago, observed that, "by an algebraical process, Mr.

Machin has approximated the quadrature of the circle much more nearly than was practicable by the methods of the ancients ; since the utmost length of man's life would have been too short for the task."

Even in the shifting hues that play over the creations of wit and humour, the phraseology is a help to invention. Thus many have remarked, that it is easier to be witty in French than in German.*

Your etymological discoveries have dispelled many a thick cloud hanging over intellectual objects, and hiding them even from the piercing eyes of Mr. Locke. I well remember my own perplexity and discouragement when I first read the following wordy and confused passages in his "Essay."

"Besides words, which are names of *ideas*, there are a great many others that are made use of to signify the *connexion* that the mind gives to *ideas*, or *propositions*, one with another. The mind in communicating its thoughts to others, does not only need signs of the *ideas* it has then before it, but others also, to show or intimate some particular action of its own, at that time, relating to those *ideas* * * * *. He who would show the right use of Particles, and what force and significancy they have, must take a little pains, enter into his own thoughts, and observe nicely the several postures of his mind in discoursing * * * *. They are all *marks of some action, or intimation of the mind*: and therefore, to understand them rightly, the several views, postures,

* A most ingenious writer goes so far as to say of the French, "C'est une langue qui va d'elle même, exprime sans qu'on s'en mêle, et parait presque toujours avoir plus d'esprit que celui qui parle."—1834.

stands, turns, limitations, and exceptions, and several other thoughts of the mind, for which we have either none, or very deficient names, are diligently to be studied."

A greater philosopher still has said, "*Verba vestigia mentis.*" What, then, must be his deserts who enables us to understand, and to employ them, by giving, as it were, their whole biography?

There are, however, difficulties in abstruse enquiries far beyond the reach of lexicons. The words, too, themselves, often come down to us from antiquity in a waving line, departing from the original signification, so far as to be opposed to it. Your admired Des Brosses has a chapter full of such examples, but I shall remind you only of one.

"L'emploi que nous faisons de notre mot *quitte* a tiré son origine d'un Latinisme assez connu. *J'en suis quitte*, c'est-à-dire, on ne m'en parlera plus; je suis en repos là-dessus: *Quietus sum ab illa re.* Sur cette locution nous avons fait le verbe *quitter* pour *abandonner*. De sorte que le mot *quitter* se trouve, dès la seconde génération, avoir quelquefois un sens tout contraire au primitif. Car lorsqu'on dit: *Je suis dans une grande inquiétude depuis le moment où vous m'avez quitte*, n'est-ce pas comme si l'on disoit en Latin: *Valda sum inquietus. ex qua die quietus sum a te?*"*

Much depends on the feelings and habits of the word-makers and word-users, as, perhaps, in the language of post-horses, *humanity* may signify *cruelty*.

Now do not think your thankful pupil impudent for

* "*Méchanisme des Langues*," Sect. 175.

confessing that you seem, occasionally, to place too much confidence in etymology, when you are analysing important terms in morals and metaphysics. You must not suspect me of undervaluing the truth of any individual derivation, or its logical consequence. The more we read and reflect, the more frequently do we discover that abstract disputes are commonly mere logomachis, wars of words, battles in the air between phantoms without souls or bodies. Words, therefore, must be examined as with a microscope.

Even though I have taken the trouble to write out these doubts, I should not have put the paper into this parcel, if I had not known that Cooper has already told you of our scepticism. Since he has turned king's evidence, he may be pardoned; but you can punish me, if you please, to-morrow, by sending me to the side-table. We shall go to Wimbledon together, and perhaps Rogers may accompany us. He is quite innocent at present, but, to own the truth, there is a conspiracy to treat you as the prophet in Virgil was served by the boys and girl, in compelling you to talk philosophy, instead of politics. Our motives are two. We think it will to you be a "douce violence," and we would much rather that you should philosophise, even at the cost of hearing our own notions refuted and laughed at.

TO THE SAME.

July, 1794. (Extract.)

It has been objected by a fine writer to your prime favourite, Mr. Locke's important refutation of the doctrine of innate ideas, and to the well-known comparison of the intellect to a sheet of blank paper, that "on the paper may be written, sugar is bitter, wormwood is sweet, gratitude is base, envy is noble ; but no force nor fraud can ever print such impressions on the mind. The human soul," it is added, " has predetermined sentiments and tastes springing from a source beyond experience, custom, or choice."

Now, this objection, though it has a plausible appearance, is not an accurate statement of the fact. Authority, and even accident, *do* frequently inscribe false propositions on the minds, both of young and old. The memory and the understanding are "*rasæ tabulæ*," for testimony and experience to write upon ; though testimony and experience, it is true, are controlled by the natures of physical and of moral existence, by our senses, and by our feelings of pain and pleasure : that is, by the very constitution both of the universe and of ourselves. It is indisputable that our senses do not usually write nonsense or falsehood on the memory ; but it is equally true, that their evidence being mistaken, they do so occasionally, and nothing but patient, persevering analysis, can efface or correct the inscriptions. The difference be-

tween visible and tangible magnitude, and, to use more homely examples, the delusive perceptions of pain in an amputated limb, and the appearances on the banks of a river while we are sailing, "*terræque urbesque recedunt*," are decisive proofs of erroneous conclusions. Indeed it requires much caution to form right opinions; and, as Dr. Moore observes, "if ideas were innate, it would save much trouble to many worthy persons."

Leibnitz, after truly representing Locke's doctrine as an exemplification of the ancient maxim, "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerat in sensu*,"* adds, "*nisi intellectus ipse*;" and Mr. Dugald Stewart warmly praises the acuteness of this remark. But how can any man think highly of an axiom which has absurdity in its very expression? Only strike out the middle clause, and see what can be made of "*Nihil est in intellectu nisi intellectus ipse*."† Why, the question itself in discussion is, "what are the laws of the intellect, and how do they originate?"

In replying to this enquiry, we must, at present, mention instinct as well as perception, though, since the principle of association (that great sensitive and intellectual law!) has been carefully traced, the theory of instinct is daily becoming less and less necessary to account for the phenomena. Here lie (and but little below the surface) the seeds of a rich harvest for the sickle of future metaphysicians. Sensation and association will probably be found to account for nearly all the appearances. Thus

* There is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the senses.

† There is nothing in the intellect but the intellect itself.

in ethics, the existence of a moral sense cannot be doubted ; but its instinctive, innate origin is, I suppose, given up by most philosophers, and habit, unavoidable habit, is admitted to be its source.

A stumble at the threshold, not unlike Leibnitz' false step, occurs in the elementary dictum of some eminent modern materialists ; "*Movent sed non promovent.*" Two great teachers in this school have defined an idea to be "a motion in the brain perceived." Now, did any man ever perceive a motion in his brain ? There may be, and there probably is a motion there, and it may be followed by perception ; but who has ever perceived the motion, or detected the connection ? Anatomists and physiologists may do their utmost, but there will always remain an undiscovered something between the bodily organ and the percipient power.

In subjects of this kind (and indeed in all subjects) it is best to learn, as it were, the alphabet of the doctrine. Many a time something may be found in the first chapter of a book, rendering it needless to read on ; and when it happens otherwise, still the benefit of examining first principles is great.

The ascent from the bottom of the hill may be fatiguing ; but, when the summit is attained, what a prospect ! What a distance between a minute examination of the mere letters composing a word, and the sublime theory that may be disclosed in its import !

You must sometimes have been surprised by the length of your journeys.

TO FRANCIS HORNER, ESQ.

Fredley Farm, 18th June, 1836.

I am not surprised that you have reflected, as you say, "again and again," on the subject of our singular conversation, although you still smile at our having fallen upon such a topic, in our long walk among the woods of NORBURY. No subject can well be more important, and none is more perplexing—it is a sea almost without a shore.

In Turgot's article, "Existence," he hardly exaggerates, though he says, "*Les degrés de probabilité dont une juste estime et une exacte mesure seroient le comble de la sagacité et de la prudence.*"*

Hear Lucretius too:

"*Nam nihil egregiùs quàm res discernere apertas
A dubiis.*"†

And Cicero; ‡ "*Benè qui conjiciet vatem hunc perhibebo optimum.*"

* "The degrees of probability, a just estimate and an exact measure of which would be the height of sagacity and prudence."

† "For nothing is more excellent than to separate the certain from the doubtful."

‡ "I will esteem him the best prophet who guesses well."

I agree with you, however, that a common opinion intimated by Gibbon, in the following passage, is not true.

"I desisted from the pursuit of mathematics before my mind was hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence; which determine the actions and opinions of our lives."

Are we not more benefited by the habits of close attention formed in the study of mathematics, than injured by the hardening process which he dreaded? Surely the necessity of walking all our lives in the twilight of probable evidence, corrects the searing influence of our seeing occasionally by the blaze of a noon-day sun.

It is remarkable, that the rules of probability have always been spoken of as important desiderata, and that several of the greatest authors have declared their intention to treat of them at length; but, somehow or other, they have always put off the task to another day. Leibnitz even tells Thomas Burnet in a letter, "Si Dieu me donne encore de la vie et de la santé, j'en ferai ma *principale* affaire."*

It has often struck me, that this never-failing postponement of the arduous undertaking cannot have arisen from a want of courage or of industry; but that it proves only a secret suspicion of the truth, that a complete, or even a very useful enumeration of such rules, is impracticable.

Fortunately, the habits always generated by an irre-

* "If God should yet spare me life and health, I will make it my chief occupation."

sistible association of ideas and motives well supply the deficiency. Only consider the vast multitude, and the complication of facts to be dealt with, their infinite degrees and shades, and the incalculable consequences of the slightest error in the data. A single leaf close to the eye may hide a mountain.

As you have mislaid our short account of those who have written on this peculiar subject, I shall copy, on the other side, my own imperfect list. What great names! What unperformed promises!

As a professional man, you needed not to be reminded of GILBERT and PHILLIPS. They are, perhaps, the best guides; since, in law, there are adjudicated principles, founded on the learning and experience of the subtlest and most pains-taking of men.

The nature of the evidence to be looked for in any particular enquiry, has been often and well considered; and herein our great master, Dr. Butler, has shown his usual superiority.

Among the humbler hills of Cumberland, I shall envy you the sight of the sublimer mountains in your native country; yet, I shall grudge you much more the opportunity of discussing these things with Mr. Dugald Stewart, either at Kinneil or in Edinburgh. With us, metaphysics are out of fashion; and I hardly know any man, but our friend Mackintosh, who cultivates this science. He, alas! is gone to another hemisphere; and in his last letter, he talks of forsaking psychology for history.

THE LIST.

Aristotle; especially Topic, ch. 14, and Ethic, ad Nicom., Lib. I. ch. 1.

Gassendi, Locke, and Leibnitz, *passim*.

St. Augustin, "De Utilitate Credendi."

Rudiger, Reusch, Muller, Hoffman, Kahle, Ahlward.

Gravesande; "Introductio ad Philosophiam."—Leyden, 1737. The chapters on simple and complex probability: the whole book on the origin of errors: the chapter on analysis and synthesis, and other parts relative to dexterity in practice.

Halley's Philosophical Transactions, No. 196, &c.

Butler's Analogy.

Borlæus, "De Lege Probabilitatis."

Bernouilli, "Ars Conjectandi."

Buffon, "Arithmétique Morale."

Hume's treatise "On Human Nature." Vol. I.

Condorcet's "Essai sur l'Application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la Pluralité des Voix."—Paris, 1785.

Thorshmid, "Historia Probabilitatis Antiquissima."—1749.

Garve, "De nonnullis quæ pertinent ad Logicam Probabilitatis."—Halle, 1776.

The concluding part of Freret's "Essay on the Evidence of History," in the *Mémoires de l'Académie*. Vol. VIII. 12mo edition.

Helvetius, "De l'Homme."—Sect. 2, Note 40. Ch. 15, Sect. 9.

Helvetius, "De l'Esprit."—Tom. I. page 7.

Mendelsohn, as quoted by Pistorius in his *Notes on Hartley*.

Robins's Answer to Berkeley's "Analyst."

The latter part of the "Report to the House of Commons on the Proceedings in Hastings's Trial, 1794." By Mr. Burke.

TO THE SAME.

Fredley Farm, July 1, 1805.

You think that I expressed myself too unguardedly in my last letter, when I said that a very useful enumeration of rules is impracticable. Perhaps I did so.

It is true, also, that the great law of thought, the association of ideas and feelings in daily life, is too vague in its results to be relied upon in abstruse reasoning. The difference between them I own to be both unquestionable and important. In a scientific experiment, we must measure heat by a thermometer, and not by the hand, though we need not ask the instrument whether we should put on an additional waistcoat.

The necessity for instant decision in life, renders it often prudent to take the chance of being right or wrong, without waiting to balance reasons very nicely. In such cases, and sometimes even in speculation, this kind of credulity is more philosophical than scepticism; though authority in abstruse investigations should usually do little more than excite attention, while in practice it must guide our conduct. We trust to the mile-stones in a journey to York, and do not wait for a trigonometrical survey before we set out. In our daily affairs, we luckily do not act on a mathematical estimate of probabilities. Who, for instance, would be perfectly at ease, were his life depending on a lottery of 5,000 tickets, though there were but one fatal blank in the wheel?

Yet what is our chance of living out the week ? Molière's well-known couplet ridicules this misapplication of philosophical arguings :—

“ To reason is our business, day by day,
And reasoning chases reason quite away.”

In experiments and in abstract pursuits, we cannot, often, be too hesitating and distrustful. Are those scales bad ones that weigh to a scruple ? You will pardon the double meaning. Yet, sometimes, even in such enquiries, while truth lies on the surface, we dig and dig only to turn up errors, almost as ridiculously as the monkey's carefully examining the back of a looking-glass to find out the image.

The mental habits formed in the streets and in the study are more than different—they are sometimes at variance with each other ; and superiority in science, as you will remember, does not always imply the soundest judgment in morals or in religion. Pascal, a superlative mathematician and an exquisite controvertist, believed that miracles were performed by a holy pickle, and wore under his shirt an unintelligible amulet.

How to measure precisely the danger of believing too readily or too reluctantly, I do not know ; and, though you are right in thinking that it would be advantageous to study the maxims of evidence, yet you are quite wrong in supposing that I can suggest a single one that is either new or incontrovertible.

The difficulties are many, and one springs up at the very outset : for the probability itself of a fact, by prepossessing the mind, may prevent due examination, and

become a reason for distrusting the general belief. Then, as we go on, argument confutes argument, fact opposes fact, testimony contradicts testimony—one man doubts the bible, another believes the gazette. A person thinks he has a pain in his arm after it has been cut off. Cross the fingers and one pebble feels like two. Do we not most plainly *see* the sun moving along the heavens? But these are old remarks, and they do not justify scepticism; they only call for caution.

Do what we will, we must philosophise, well or ill, and the minds of the ignorant swarm with insect-hypotheses; they for ever generalise too soon and too much. Objects at a distance, or seen by a mere glance, are much alike, and all colours are the same to those that are in the dark. Lessing has declared, that if the Almighty had offered truth in one hand, and the art of searching for it in the other, he would have taken the latter. This is pretty strong; and very different is the fashionable creed in our time; though it is confessed by some, that metaphysics are good preparatory studies, as some green crops may be profitably raised, if to be ploughed into the land intended to bear more useful grain. It is allowed, too, that they may invigorate the faculties, as archers strengthen their arms by shooting into the air.

I think I see you smiling at this long postscript to my last letter (for it is no more), as a new (I wish I could say an amusing) instance of the inutility of such pursuits, ending, after many turnings and windings, just where they began. You look a little giddy just now, after this intellectual waltz, this jaunt in a round-about; “vacuum per inane volutus.” Take down directly one of your law-books; read but two pages, and the walls of your chambers will again stand still.

TO SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

January 8, 1830.

Your friend must have been in a very good humour, when he spoke so civilly of my hasty plan for the study of that much ridiculed science, metaphysics; and you must have been more than reasonably humble, when, being so much better informed than I am, you could have any wish to ask my feeble help in directing your young and eager correspondent. Why! you surely have forgotten that I do not read the German writers, whom you have of late esteemed somewhat more highly than you formerly did. Perhaps you are too busy to spare the time for such a sketch, and any desire of yours is sufficient to overcome even my reluctance to appear as teaching him from whom I am accustomed to learn. I thought you justly blamed Mr. Dugald Stewart the other day, for having spoken so decidedly of the German philosophy, without having the means of examining the books of its original inventors; yet, pardon me, I must, though with real diffidence, own, that so far as I am enabled, by the French and English expositors to comprehend their doctrines, they seem to be chiefly ancient errors newly christened and made formidable by the disguise of a systematic and mysterious nomenclature—an old play with new dresses and decorations. The cobwebs appear to be spun with scientific formality, and with some elegance. Of course, those learned persons,

who have taken the trouble to learn the new language, will say, that "the grapes are sour;" I hope they have found them sweet and nutritive. In our English gardens they do not ripen. Now, then, you will acknowledge that I am a blind guide, and not fit to be trusted. Give this caution to the young student; but here, notwithstanding, is the list that you request, and you will see that I by no means advise an enquirer to read in a chronological order.

Perhaps the following is a convenient arrangement of the works to be studied.

Locke's "Conduct of the Understanding."

The first book of his "Essay."

Duncan's "Logic," not as a logic, but as a clear and elegant exposition of Locke's elementary opinions.

Hobbes's "Treatise on Human Nature."

The first nine chapters of the "Leviathan."

Hobbes's "Treatise on Liberty and Necessity."

Hobbes's "Computatio," in his Latin works, which are not in the folio edition.

Locke, as you know, has borrowed from Gassendi and from Hobbes, though he prudently did not venture to quote the latter, foreseeing that he should call up a host of implacable and powerful enemies.

HARTLEY'S "Theory," paying no attention to his hypothesis of vibrations.

Condillac "Logique," and "Essai sur l'Origine de nos Connoissances."

N. B.—I have a manuscript of Hartley's Theory, dated many years before Condillac had published.

Bonnet—"Psychologie," and his "Essai Analytique," are good, but they may be deferred or omitted.

The remainder of Locke's "Essay."

Collins on "Liberty and Necessity."

Dr. Clark's metaphysical works.

Reid's "Enquiry." His larger work may be looked at cursorily.

All Dugald Stewart's works—for, though he is sometimes wrong in his elementary principles, he is always an instructive, elegant, and encouraging writer.

Berkeley's "Theory of Vision," which, I know, you justly consider as an inestimable contribution to the science.

Whateley's "Logic."

By this time, Aristotle must be consulted. The indexes will facilitate the search; and, if the tyro is not a thorough hellenist, let him get help from the best translators, or rather the paraphraser and commentators on the "Ethics," "Politics," and "Analytics."

Cudworth's "Immutable Morality."

Butler's "Analogy," and all his sermons.

Cooper's "Essay on Moral Obligation."

Shaftesbury's "Enquiry concerning Virtue."

Hume's "Enquiry into the Principles of Morals."

Dr. Johnson's "Review of Soame Jenyns."

Bentham's "Essay on Legislation." How remarkable that he should consider Hume as the original author of his ethical system!

Mackintosh's Dissertation—to be read with care.

Dr. Brown's "Lectures." The ethical lectures seem to me inferior to the metaphysical, being not only wordy, but erroneous in the fundamental principle.

He has misconceived Hartley's and Hume's opinions;

yet, the earliest parts of the work are of much value; especially his account of the origin of our notion of extension and external existence. This excepted, it appears to me that even his best passages are chiefly commentaries on Hartley's thoughts, though he does not seem to have read him carefully. Brown is also too declamatory and too full of repetitions.

Mill's "Analysis of the Human Mind."

The writers here recommended often differ from each other; but it frequently happens that, to understand an author, it is necessary to look at his predecessors and his antagonists. In most speculations, prevalent opinions are either disputed or defended. This should never be forgotten.

I am aware that this is the road-book of a long journey; but, I believe that, in such subjects, "the farthest way about is the nearest way home." I remember Mr. Horne Tooke's saying of intellectual philosophy, that he had become better acquainted with the country through having had the good luck, sometimes, to lose his way—"Si non errasset fecerat ille minus."

To you, it is altogether needless to add one word as to the probable advantages of such a laborious pursuit of first principles, being so well aware, as you are, that to begin at the beginning in the sciences, as well as in matters of fact, is the nearest and safest road to the end. Even sensible men are too commonly satisfied with tracing their thoughts a little way backwards, and they are, of course, soon perplexed by a profounder adversary. In this respect, most people's minds are too like a child's garden, where the flowers are planted without their roots.

It may be said of morals and of literature, as truly as of sculpture and painting, that to understand the outside of human nature, we should be well acquainted with the inside. You can handle the anatomist's knife as well as the artist's pencil.

TO THE SAME.

January 30, 1831.

As your Dissertation must, undoubtedly, be published separately, I hope it will be done without delay, and I am anxious that you should render it complete. This will cost you but little trouble, and will require but a short addition.

•

I have now read it attentively for the second time, and I feel it to be merely justice to say, that I think it by far the most profound and convincing work on Ethics that I have ever met with. In saying so much, I am aware that I am giving it no less than the praise of being the best book on the best subject in all philosophy. Are you content?

At the same time, let me own, that I think its value would be greatly increased by a short statement of your own view of MORAL OBLIGATION. This will be little more than an abridgment of scattered passages in your Dissertation. Were it otherwise, I should be disinclined to withdraw your attention from more pressing and, I fear, more engaging pursuits.

So much of our happiness inevitably depends on the conduct of others, that it has been a serious enquiry, in all times, by what rules we should be guided in our mutual intercourse. Indeed, to man only it belongs to know what *should be* as well as *what is*.

Few differences of opinion have existed respecting

these rules, and none but such as can easily be reconciled, or accounted for ; but far otherwise is the case when it has been asked, "What is a good action?" "Why *ought* we to seek the well-being of others as well as of ourselves?"

The answers given you are well acquainted with, and they have been enumerated by writers of great learning and of much acuteness. To you, therefore, I shall only say, that it appears to me indisputable that *benevolent intention and beneficial tendency must combine to constitute the moral goodness of an action*. To do as much good, and as little evil as we can, is the brief and intelligible principle that comprehends all subordinate maxims. Both good tendency and good will are indispensable ; for conscience may be erroneous as well as callous, may blunder as well as sleep. Perhaps a man cannot be thoroughly mischievous unless he is honest.

In truth, practice is also necessary, since it is one thing to see that a line is crooked, and another thing to be able to draw a straight one. It is not quite so easy to do good as those may imagine who never try.

Neither can it be disputed, I think, that our understanding, our reason, (call it which you will,) must be judge, in the last resort, of every moral quality ; be that whatever it may be, which urges us to act, to approve, or to condemn. Yet, fortunately, we have not been left entirely, nor chiefly, to the cold decisions of our intellect. Far readier and stronger motives push us on, than the tardy results of rational calculation. Yes ! feelings have ever blended with convictions in forming our habits—habits, beside which nothing is a sufficiently prompt and

effectual cause of action in human nature. Virtue thus soon becomes perfectly disinterested—soon so much a feeling as scarcely to seem also a principle; nor is the hypothesis of what is called the moral sense necessary; if, by that term, be meant any faculty innate and instinctive. Once formed, the composition is indissoluble; the current is one, though fed by a thousand springs.

I am fully sensible, too, that the end sought for is seldom or never the immediate stimulus to action.

Now, in what manner habits spring up and grow, is no secret to you, nor to any person acquainted with that law of our nature which is called Association by Hartley, Suggestion by Brown, and Sequence by Mill. The first has traced them to their sources.

With you, I regret that no term, yet employed, indicates the singleness of the compound, when once the ingredients have been blended.

Thus far, probably, no real difficulty occurs; but where is to be found a short, clear, and satisfactory explanation of the obligatoriness of moral conduct? Certainly not in Paley. Yet it must ever have been unspeakably desirable to ascertain what is meant by such words as *ought*, *should*, *duty*, *merit*, *demerit*. In every language there are corresponding terms, but it will be enough to analyse them in our own.

I conjecture that this deficiency has arisen from the inadequacy of a definition to explain the force of words that have been gathering associations from the beginning of life, from the cradle to the grave.

Etymology seldom accounts for the modern meaning of a word; yet it is often useful to ask the first question of etymology.

It seems as if the notion of DEBT were always visible in these terms ; and, if so, they are plainly instances of a common figure of speech employing the name of a striking part to designate the whole. But I am venturing beyond my purpose, and on such a theme, "*Satiùs est silere quam parùm dicere.*"

1

VERSES.



A NEW EDITION.

• “Neque si quis scribat, UTI NOS,
Sermoni propria, putes hunc esse poetam,”
HORAT. Sat. IV. Lib. 1.

1

EPISTLE TO AN EMINENT POET.

WRITTEN IN 1792.

"Hic error tamen, et levis hæc insania quantas
Virtutes habeat."—

HOR. Epis. I. Lib.

Yes ! thou hast chosen well "the better part,"
And, for the triumphs of the noblest art,
Hast wisely scorn'd the sordid cares of life,
Its gaudy joys, and its ambitious strife.

Less fitted for the many, than the few
That love the Beautiful, and seek the True,
Too proud to pay his honour for his fame,
To wish a statesman's, or a conqueror's name,
The Poet shuns the Senate, and the Field ;
Known in his verse, but in his life conceal'd :
As some unheeded flower, that loves the shade,
Is by the fragrance of its leaf betray'd.

Far from the world's broad glare, the din of men,
He seeks the pathless wood, the twilight glen,
The silent mountain, the deserted stream,
Unseen, unheard, to woo the waking dream :
Now from the hanging rock and foaming shore,
Raves to the deaf sea, while its waters roar :
Or musing sits, while airy voices call,
Whole summer-days beside the torrent-fall.

O'er the wild heath, alone, at eve he strays,
 To catch with lingering look the sun's last rays :
 Or watch the prying moon-beam, as it roves
 Through towers forsaken long, and haunted groves :
 And, as each glimpse some phantom-form reveals,
 A strange belief, unknown till then, he feels :
 But oft, when Fancy wakes her shadowy broods,
 On his shut sense no sight, no sound, intrudes,
 To break the spells that bid her visions play
 In hues far brighter than belong to day.
 Then from his lips burst forth the unbidden strains
 In that wild hour when reason scarcely reigns.
 Now in the closet's stillness, through the night,
 He watches by the taper's trembling light,
 The deep recesses of his mind explores,
 Wakes every sleeping thought in memory's stores,
 With eager joy each dawning hint pursues,
 Yet courts in vain the coy, capricious Muse :
 For still he finds his struggling powers too weak
 The dazzling vision, swelling theme, to speak ;
 The tuneless sounds, the sullied speech, of earth
 Refuse to give his revelations birth :
 Still the dark phrase, th' unmarshalled thoughts confess
 His shame, his glory, rapture and distress,
 Mute till the Muse her aid propitious brings,
 * And heav'nly themes in heav'n's own accents sings.
 High o'er the earth's revolving poles he soars,
 Scorning her trodden paths, her fathom'd shores,

* Poesis.....etiam ad animi magnitudinem et ad
 mores conferat—Et meritò divinitatis cujuspiam particeps
 videri possit.—Bacon, De Augm. Scient., Cap. XIII.
 Lib. 2.

With dauntless hand the gates of heav'n unfolds,
 And all its glories, unrebuk'd, beholds!
 Or, darting downward, with presumptuous flight,
 Explores the realms of everlasting night;
 Or calls to life creations all his own,
 Where brighter suns, and sweeter shades are known,
 And fairer forms still charm the unsated eye
 Than here just bloom to fade, just breathe to die.
 No vapours rise as the fair morn awakes,
 But, all unveil'd, light from her beauty breaks:
 On odorous wing unwearied zephyrs play,
 Murmur sweet music, and abate the day;
 In clouds of gold the lingering evenings close,
 And every night the moon's mild lustre glows:
 O'er gold and gems the living waters flow,
 Flowers of all hues, all scents, uncultur'd, blow;
 Rich harvests (*here* the slow reward of toil)
 Bend the wild bough, and crown the untroubled soil:
 On every breeze soft notes of rapture swell
 From echoing rock, green hill, or bowery dell:
 And through the year (one bright unchanging spring)
 The coy night-warbling bird delights to sing.
 No hawk pursues the minstrels of the air,
 Nor shuns the kid the lion's bloodless lair;
 And none harm man, nor are of man the prey,
 And friendship fears no change, love no decay:
 No pleasures pall, no cares, no pains annoy,
 To ask is to obtain, to wish is to enjoy.

Scenes that recall the visions of that world
 Whence man's rebellious spirit erst was hurl'd,
 The fading memory, fainting hopes restore
 Of all he held, of all he was before.

Yet were this all his boast, how poor the praise!
He proudly seeks man's abject thoughts to raise,
Wakes all our hopes of glory, fears of shame,
Incites to merit, and rewards with fame.

Heroes and kings their names, their forms, may trust
To the grav'd medal, or the mimic bust,
Their deeds consign to painting's glowing hand,
Raise pillars to the sky, and bid them stand:
In vain!—the aspiring column prostrate falls,
The colours vanish from the faithless walls;
Soon the dim coin shall mock the poring eye;
Born of the rock the breathing statue die,
Like man his proudest works to dust return:
See! through the shattered tomb the mould'ring urn!
Temple and tower shall strew th' encumber'd plain:
Of mightiest empires not a trace remain;
But verse! immortal, ever in its prime,
Defies decay, and triumphs over time!

Inspir'd, not taught, the bard's exalted art,
In sacred trust, to few the heav'ns impart:
A new, a nobler sense in man to wake,
From all his instincts all that's earthly take,
O'er Nature's works a nameless charm to throw;
On life a grace, a glory, to bestow;
Its duties dignify, its joys enhance,
And lend to truth the interest of romance,
To teach content, yet bid our hopes aspire,
Endear this world, and fit us for a higher.

Proud of his high commission, he disdains
To charm by vulgar or unhallow'd strains;
Yet stoops to guide the heedless steps of youth,
And leads through fiction's flowery path to truth:

With pious fraud seduces man from ill,
And courts his fancy to control his will.

Sweet though his numbers as the murmuring stream,
And bright each image as the morning beam,
Though the wit sparkle, though the passion flame,
And Fashion dictate to obedient Fame;
Yet—if the theme be trivial or impure,
The verse is mortal :—it shall not endure :
Virtue's the vital spark, the deathless soul,
That must pervade, and animate the whole :
He from the altar borrows all his fires,
And consecrates to heav'n what heav'n inspires.

Oh haste! the laurel twine, the statue raise,
Vast the desert, and equal be the praise!
Lo! Plenty at his feet her tribute flings!
His rank with princes, and his seat with kings!
Ah no!—in penury, perhaps in shame,
He lives, whom, lost, contending nations claim;
Lives—not dismayed, nor murmuring at his lot,
Content though poor, not humbled though forgot.
He can at once foresee, and brave his doom,
Sure that the palm shall flourish o'er his tomb,
With good for ill a thankless world repays,
And proud to have serv'd mankind foregoes its praise.

How different is thy fate, accomplished friend!
Whom still the most commended most commend :
Thine all the honours of a well-earn'd name,
Secure of present as of future fame;
Thine fortune's favours too, and thine the art
(So rarely learnt!) to use them, and to impart.

Thus gifted, thus encouraged, be it thine
To lift thy light on high, and bid it shine,

A star! to guide the wanderer, as he strays
O'er life's dark ocean, and its trackless ways:
Thy course so well begun pursuing still,
Obey thy call; thy destiny fulfil;
And pour out all the treasures of thy mind,
Bestow'd on thee, in trust for all mankind.

EPISTLE TO A LADY,

WITH SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.—WRITTEN IN 1788.

"Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plinius, ac mellus Chrysippo et Crantore dicit."

HOR. Epist. II. Lib. 1.

Ah! though invited by the spring and thee,
In vain I sigh, and struggle to get free:
'Mid smoke and noise, repining, I must stay,
And leave untasted all the sweets of May;
To waste in stifling crowds the fragrant hours,
And lose the year's first shoots, and earliest flowers.

For now the tardy white-thorn blows, and now
The blossom hangs on every orchard-bough:
Earth seems new-born, each blade and leaflet teems
With murmurs of delight, and golden gleams—
As waking myriads swarm below, above,
And the dead quicken, and the living love.
And now each morn what clouds of incense rise!
What hymns of rapture! grateful to the skies!
While all night long a sweet sad voice is heard,
The soothing vespers of the wakeful bird.
Man too, reviving, his glad tribute pays:
(Most cause has he for thankfulness and praise)
Each vernal scene to his prophetic eye
More dear, as harbinger of Summer nigh,

Soon to expand her warm maternal wing,
And nurse the tender infants of the Spring:
So shall the earth her countless broods sustain,
And of her millions none be born in vain.

Yet must I stay, though bidden to attend
The blissful rite that gives thee to my friend,
And at the altar hear thy trembling voice,
And see thy blushes, own thy maiden-choice.
Though absent present, I unite my prayer,
(Needless if love excluded every care)
That Fate, befriending virtue, may bestow
More than ye hope, and all ye wish below.

Source of my friend's best joys, who still shall find,
When thy cheek fades, fresh beauties in thy mind,
Sweet soother of those ills that all must share,
And he must learn, tho' blest with thee, to bear,
Could Love alone life's few short hours employ,
Bidding Time borrow swifter wings from joy,
Sages had taught, and Poets sung, in vain,
All art were folly, and all science pain—
But oh ! ye days when beauty's soft control
First woke the slumbering instincts of the soul,
Sudden and swift when Love's resistless flame
Flash'd through each kindling atom of our frame,
When the gay visions of its infant hours,
And all its first fine ecstasies were ours,
Too soon your value from your loss we learn !
Too soon ye fly ! ah ! never to return !
Some busy fiend of Folly's envious broods
In our defenceless paradise intrudes,
And lures from peace and joy to grief and shame,
Whispering vain hopes of pleasure, power, or fame.

Exiled these blissful bowers, before our eyes
 A bleak wide world in cheerless prospect lies,
 Where some must force, by unrelenting toil,
 Their scanty comforts from a stubborn soil,
 While others sigh, amid their stores to find
 No cure for care, no medicine for the mind,
 To still the pang that conscience can impart,
 And calm the restless pulses of the heart,
 Throbbing as burns ambition's feverish fire,
 Faltering with grief, or fluttering with desire.
 Still must we bear, though shunning public strife,
 The small hostilities of private life,
 Those nameless, countless evils that infest
 All, all that breathe, the happiest and the best.

Even Love from every ill is not secure,
 But has its hours of absence to endure.
 These hours to cheat, and speed the sluggish day,
 What spell so witching as the poet's lay?

He from its cares the enraptur'd soul can steal,
 While busied fancy quite forgets to feel:
 Tranc'd in the day-dreams of the fabling Muse,
 The dull realities of life we lose;
 The senses sleep; truth yields to fiction's power;
 A transient frenzy fills the ecstatic hour.

But this the humblest triumph of his art;
 Which soothes to soften, melts to mould the heart;
 Calls forth new powers, with loftier passions fires,
 And generous thoughts, and glorious deeds inspires.

Not thus the world's contagious school, for thence
 The head buys knowledge at the heart's expense:
 An after-wisdom, ever learnt too late
 To save from error, or its ills abate;

A purblind prudence, missing still its aim,
 Almost a vice, though with a virtue's name;
 Knowledge of evil, hurtful, humbling truth!
 That, while it teaches, taints the thoughts of youth,
 Its cheerful faith with dreary doubts annoys,
 Daunts its brave hopes, and blights its opening joys.

Vice is not safely seen, though seen forewarn'd,
 Better unknown, than known but to be scorn'd :
 More wise in happy ignorance to remain,
 Than in the tranquil bosom nurse Disdain,
 And Hate, and Terror, passions all unblest,
 Unmeet to fill the sanctuary of the breast.

Fear is low born, but Hope of high descent,
 Allied at once to Virtue and Content.

Ah! if we see no smiles in Nature's face,
 Her gifts lose half their value, all their grace :
 Trembling we take them, and with thankless mind,
 (Deaf to the harmony, the beauty blind,)
 Too oft revile the bounteous, blissful plan,
 And its great Author, in his image, Man.

Then be the Muse thy teacher, and thy guide,
 Nor heed the bigot's fear, the sage's pride,
 * In SHAKESPEARE'S scenes, the unsullied mind may see,
 Safe from its harms, the world's epitome ;
 May learn to fill its duties, meet its cares,
 Enjoy its blessing, and escape its snares.

In life's gay glare, as in the solar blaze,
 Confused and lost each mingling colour plays ;
 Opprest, the baffled eyeball turns away,
 Nor can discern the tints that form the day :

* He that has read Shakspeare with attention, will perhaps find little new in the crowded world.—JOHNSON.

His page prismatic breaks the dazzling mass,
And bids the blended hues distinctly pass.

No dead remains of ancient art he knew,
But from the life man's naked nature drew:
Each changeful feature of the soul portray'd,
And caught each latent muscle as it play'd;
The bold but faithful sketch shall live, and last
Till the decaying world itself be past.

He the dim glass of learning could despise,
And look through nature with unaided eyes:
The sun of genius, with resistless ray,
On all her dark recesses pours the day.
He sees, exposed to his presumptuous glance,
The magic cavern, and the fairy-dance;
Dares the dread secrets of the grave to trace,
And view its awful wonders face to face;
The sullen spectres at his will employs,
The murderer's couch to haunt, to blast his festal joys.

But themes like these to loftier strains belong,
And the Bride trembles at the lengthening song.

For now, in fair perspective, rise to view,
All the heart sigh'd for, all the fancy drew,
In those gay hours when love *was* life's employ,
And Hope was young, and credulous of joy.
Oh! may she find each flattering promise truth,
And Time fulfil the prophecies of Youth.
But, should Fate frown, may virtue's cheerful ray,
More bright than suns, illumine life's cloudy day,
Dispel the shades that o'er its evening rise,
And light her footsteps to the expecting skies.

POSTSCRIPT—1804.

Thus, long, long since, my verse prophetic flow'd,
 But Fate has more than I foretold bestow'd :
 Still, blest and blessing, each succeeding year
 Has found thee happier, lovelier, and more dear.

Yes! there are charms that scorn the spoiler Time,
 More than predicted by my timorous rhyme:
 Then the gay bride—the wife, the mother now,
 A graver beauty decks thy matron brow.
 Years while they stole have giv'n grace for grace,
 Thy virtues are recorded in thy face:
 A thousand tender thoughts have gather'd there,
 More likeness to thy heart thy features bear.
 More of his virtues too, who still is thine,
 Smile in thy looks, and through thy manners shine.

Of those we love unconsciously we learn :
 We think their thoughts, and with their passions burn,
 Breathe the same accents, the same idiom speak :
 Strong in their strength—but in their weakness weak.

How grateful then art thou, to him allied,
 Whose merits were thy choice, and are thy pride!

So shall ye both (long hence) survive in one,
 Both still be lov'd and honour'd in your son :
 Not o'er his form alone your semblance play,
 His mind your blended influence shall betray :
 The mother's softness, and the father's fire,
 In one harmonious character conspire :
 With feeling spirit, modesty with worth,
 Shall be the proofs, and blessings of his birth.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND ON MARRIAGE.

WRITTEN IN 1790.

"Poor moralist! and what art thou?"—GRAY.

Here, where his rapid flood the Tamar leads
Through desert cliffs, wild woods, and pathless meads,
Or where, in conflict with the lessening shores,
Up the sweet inland-vale the Atlantic pours,
While with the thrush the seamew blends her notes,
Or on the rocking surge in slumber floats, '
And oft the ploughman stays his team to mark
The drooping flag of many a captured bark
Following the conqueror's course, as on he rides,
And stems, with foaming prow, the murmuring tides,—
Here, once again I bid the world adieu,
And my heart turns to friendship and to you.

Friend of my youth! who first, with fostering ray,
Play'd round my morn of life, now gild my day,
(Nor shall one sullen vapour rise to lour,
And cloud its influence o'er my evening hour)
While you, in plighted faith, and mutual love,
Find joys on earth resembling those above,
And, proud a father's hallowed name to bear,
Taste pleasure's cordial in the cup of care,
Sad through a solitary world I stray,
With none to cheer my steps, nor chide my stay.

Not ours to slumber in supine content,
Or only wake to weep o'er time misspent :
To man a task is set, a blessing given,
To do the will, and earn the joys of heav'n.

Engrafted on the stock of DUTY rise
Fruits ever fair, transplanted from the skies,
And far more rare, more precious, than of old
Bloom'd on the Hesperian tree in living gold :
Than those more subtle to revive and save
* Which to the wandering chief great Hermes gave.
Or Helen crush'd to drug the wondrous bowl
† That sooth'd his son, and stay'd his drooping soul ;
For these have power the wounded mind to heal,
And bid remorse itself forget to feel ;
And these are yours, who, gifted to excel,
Peferr'd in peace and privacy to dwell ;
And chose the safe, sequester'd path, that steals
Far from the highway-crowd, and crash of wheels :
Who, skilled in that rare art, the art to live,
Ask not the world for more than it can give ;
But, taught to fear its strife, and shun its noise,
Disdain its honours, and distrust its joys,
Have sought content, not wealth, esteem, not fame,
And have deserved, though not desired, a name.
To thy pure mind reveal'd, in early youth,
The seeming paradox, but sovereign truth,
(Oft to the aged and the wise unknown,)
That seeking others' good we find our own.

* *Odyssey*, Book X. line 302.

† *Odyssey*, Book IV. line 220.

Generous self-love ! whose dictates to pursue
 (Alas ! the unenvied privilege of few !)
 Fills with such sweet employment every hour,
 That whether wayward Fortune shine or lour,
 Whether above ambition or below,
 A bliss unborrow'd of the world we know,
 And, blest in blessing, proudly can disclaim
 Rank, riches, power, and (harder task !) ev'n fame.

The social Passions their own bliss create,
 A bliss that's scarcely subject even to Fate.
 Friendship though call'd to suffer or endure :
 Love without hope, that finds, that seeks, no cure ;
 That can persist unknown, persist unshar'd,
 For Love, like Virtue, is its own reward :
 Pity though unavailing : vain regret
 For those we see no more, but ne'er forget,
 (As pensive Memory all the past restores,
 Yearns for the absent, or the lost deplores :)
 The fear that watches in a mother's eye,
 When first her infant breathes its feeble cry,
 That never sleeps, but guards him, as he strays,
 Through all the perils of his early days :
 Even these, exposed to pain, alarm, or grief,
 In their own generous nature find relief :
 Nay, often, in the sharpest wounds they feel
 There springs a balm that can do more than heal,
 That can delight, as well as ease, impart,
 A subtler pleasure kindle in the heart
 Than selfish triumphs, or the dead repose,
 The sullen quiet, that the stoic knows.

Cold on the mountain-heath, exposed and bare,
 The lone oak shudders in the troubled air,

Around his stem her arms no woodbine flings,
Beneath his shade no tender sapling springs :
His leaf untimely falls : his shattered form
Shrinks from the fury of the driving storm ;
But born in happier soil, in grove or wood,
Shelter'd, his spreading branches long had stood,
And borne their annual honours green in age,
Safe from the summer-blaze, the winter's rage.

Emblem of him whose solitary cares
No partner of his pleasures more than shares :
For love too proud, for happiness too wise,
He looks on beauty with undazzled eyes,
Computes, compares, and gravely, sagely cold,
In cautious folly, rash delay, grows old ;
Doubts till fastidious youth his suit derides,
And Time (the coward's fortitude) decides.

Haply he seeks in mercenary arms
Love's modest pleasures, and mysterious charms,
Presumes to hope its transports can be sold,
Trusting the weak omnipotence of gold.
But these Wealth cannot buy ; Vice cannot know ;
Pure are the countless sources whence they flow ;
From faith long tried, from lives that blend in one ;
From many a soft word spoken, kind deed done ;
Too small, perhaps, for each to have a name,
Too oft recurring much regard to claim :
As in fair constellations may combine
The stars that, singly, undistinguish'd shine.
Love, too, is proud, and will not be controll'd ;
Timid, and must be rather guess'd than told ;
Would be divin'd, but then by only one,
And fain the notice of all else would shun :

It stays not to forgive, it cannot see
 The failings from which none, alas ! are free :
 Blind but to faults, quick-sighted to descry
 Merit oft hid from a less searching eye :
 Ever less prone to doubt than to believe ;
 Ever more glad to give than to receive :
 Constant as kind, tho' changing nature, name ;
 Many, yet one ; another, yet the same :
 'Tis Friendship, Pity, Joy, Grief, Hope, nay Fear,
 Not the least tender when in form severe.
 It dwells with every rank, in every clime,
 And sets at nought the malice even of Time :
 In youth more rapturous, but in age more sure,
 Chief blessing of the rich, sole comfort of the poor.

But mark the evening of the lone man's life !
 Deserted then ! perhaps disturb'd by strife !
 Ah then ! in dreary age, 'tis his to sigh
 For tender care, and soothing sympathy.
 By his sick bed no long-lov'd face appears ;
 No well-known step, no well-known voice he hears :
 Strangers, for hire, his last sad moments tend ;
 No children's prayers relenting heav'n ascend :
 He dies, and is forgot !—Scarce known his doom ;
 And weeds soon hide his unfrequented tomb.

Start from thy trance, thou fool ! awake in time !
 Snatch the short pleasures of thy fleeting prime !
 While yet youth's healthful fever warms the blood,
 And the pulse throbs in vigour's rapid flood ;
 While love invites, whose spells possess the power
 Ages of bliss to crowd into an hour !
 Though to fond memory each blest hour appears
 Rich with the transports of eventful years !

To Love alone such magic can belong :
The present still so short ! the past so long !
But youth is on the wing, and will not stay ;
Fair morn too oft of a foul wintery day !
A warm but watery gleam extinguished soon
In storm, or vapour, gathering o'er its noon :
And should the unwearied sun shine on, till night
Quench his hot ray and cloud his cheerful light,
How fast the shadow o'er the dial flies !
While to himself fond man a debtor dies,
Trusting to-morrow still, or misemploy'd
He leaves the world unknown, and unenjoy'd.

Haste, then, as nature dictates dare to live ;
Ask of thy youth the pleasures youth should give :
So shall thy manhood and thy age confess
That of the past the present learns to bless ;
And thou shalt boast, with mingling joy and pride,
The wife, the mother, dearer than the bride,
And own, as on thy knees thy children grow,
That home becomes an early heav'n below.

There still an angel hovers o'er the fence,
To drive with flaming sword all evil thence :
There, in a little grove of kindred, rise
Those tender plants, the human charities,
Which, in the world's cold soil and boisterous air,
Withhold their blossoms, and refuse to bear,
Or all unshelter'd from the blaze of day,
Their golden fruit falls premature away.

Hail, holy marriage ! hail, indulgent law !
Whose kind restraints in closer union draw
Consenting hearts and minds :—By thee confin'd,
Instinct's ennobled, and desire refined.

Man is a savage else, condemn'd to roam
 Without companion, and without a home :
 And helpless woman, as alone she strays,
 With sighs and tears her new-born babe surveys ;
 But choosing, chosen, never more to part,
 New joys, new duties, blending in her heart,
 Endow'd alike to charm him and to mend,
 Man gains at once a mistress and a friend :
 In one fair form obtaining from above
 An angel's virtues and a woman's love :
 Then guarded, cherish'd, and confest her worth,
 She scorns the pangs that give his offspring birth,
 Lifts for the father's kiss the laughing boy,
 And sees and shares his triumph and his joy.

Source of our bliss, and solace of our woe,
 To thee our value as our joy we owe ;
 On thee all morals, and all laws depend,
 And, reft of thee, society must end !

This earth resplendent in her rich array !
 Herb, tree, fruit, flower ; yon radiant orb of day !
 The moon, fair mirror of his soften'd light !
 The stars that crowd the purple vault of night !
 The wandering comet's bright, portentous train !
 The expanse of heav'n ! th' illimitable main !
 The storm that lifts its billows to the sky !
 The bursting cloud whence fiery arrows fly !
 The awful voice of thunder ! and the shock
 Of earthquakes, when the globe's huge pillars rock !
 Its countless flocks and herds ! the savage brood
 That shake the forest with their cries for food !
 The unwieldy sovereigns of the living deep !
 The shoals half-sentient in her caves that sleep !

The swarms that revel on each leaf and blade
In rainbow hues, and burning gold array'd !
The exulting tenants of the peopled sky !
Those worlds on worlds that mock the assisted eye !
Stupendous scene !—Could less than Heav'n create
The parts so wondrous of a whole so great !
—Without their lord, the moral being, Man,
Say, what are all !—a chaos, not a plan :
MAN placed on earth, behold the full design
Declares aloud its Author is divine :
And, hark ! a voice from heav'n proclaims his will,
That favour'd man's immortal race should fill
The world's wide fields, o'er every tribe should reign,
Crown the whole work, and nought be made in vain.

EPISTLE FROM THE ALPS.

THUN, 1816.

"Mi giovera narrare altrui
Le novita vedute, e dir, io fui."—

TASSO, GER. Lib. xv. 38.

Releas'd at length I drop that heavy oar,
Which thousands (once fast chain'd) must quit no more,
And like a steed let loose, that shakes his mane,
And loudly neighing, scours across the plain,
With kindling hopes, and swelling heart, I fly
For health and pleasure to a fairer sky.

The anchor's weigh'd, the north-wind fills the sail :
Adieu, dear ENGLAND ! FRANCE, thy shores I hail !
Not now to linger in thy lengthening plains,
Or gilded city, revelling in its chains ;
Reft of its spoil, those miracles of art !
Which through th' enchanted eye exalt the heart ;
For they reconquer'd twice, and repossess,
Shall with their rightful lords for ever rest ;
Borne back in triumph by the blood-stain'd arms
Of those, who from the cradle felt their charms,
Yet bought too dearly in that gallant strife
By many a lov'd, and long lamented life.

Far to the south in joyful haste I run
To bask in valleys nearer to the sun :
And, lo ! where, fearless of his hottest fires,
High o'er the clouds the hoary ALP aspires !

In vain the thunder rolls, the lightnings fly,
His icy summit braves the burning sky.

O'er earth and heav'n what sudden splendours play,
As in the west declines the orb of day!
But, ah! the glory fades, and melts away.

As gay my hopes, as swiftly have they fled,
Of those bereft whose faltering steps I led,
Of those so dear, whose absence dims the day,
While sad and lonely onward still I stray.

Oh! were they here the visions to behold,
That still before my moistening eyes unfold!

In vain!—for ENGLAND and for home they sail,
To shelter that sweet flower so fair, so frail,
Which now in hope, and now, alas! in fear,
They strive thro' sunshine, and thro' show'r, to rear.
Then flow my verse! to soothe their just regret:
Nor their last wish, their parting charge forget.
The rude, faint sketch their patience shall forgive:
For how shall language bid the landscape live?

See hills o'er hills in rich confusion rise!
(Their blue tops blending with the distant skies)
O'er the still lake their giant-shadows throw,
And view their awful forms revers'd below.
The dizzy pass where scarce the chamois goes
O'er seas of ice, and through eternal snows:
Th' o'erwhelming avalanche, of power to sweep
Flock, herd, and village, down the yawning steep;
High o'er the dark abyss the plank that bends
From cliff to cliff, now sinks, and now ascends
Beneath the hunter's foot, while, scarcely heard,
Sails far below, and screams the imperial bird,

The headlong Fall, on whose resplendent spray
 In tiny circlets its own rainbows play ;
 (Oft from the summit flies the ponderous rock
 Hurl'd down in thunder by the torrent's shock,
 As on it foams, with many an oak up-torn,
 Raging from morn to eve, from eve to morn :)
 The rifted chasm ; the cavern full of night,
 Where the wild brook eludes the baffled sight.
 The countless streams that feed the living lake,
 And gently bid its slumbering waters wake ;
 While from each bay, behind the sheltering trees,
 Steals many a bark to catch the welcome breeze,
 Spreads the white sail, or lifts the sparkling oar,
 Seeking, for gain or sport, the distant shore,
 Now o'er the willing wave exulting glides,
 Now bravely struggles with the vanquished tides :
 The wilderness of woods ! the vale of flowers !
 Green, as in spring-time, through the sultry hours,
 By hills o'er-arched that lend both shade and showers.

Haply of old some gentle Angel, sent
 To heal some grief, or prompt some high intent,
 To smite the oppressor, or uplift the opprest,
 Returning homeward from his high behest,
 Pleas'd with his work of justice or of grace,
 Paus'd here, and left his blessing on the place.

So fair the land that as its children stray
 Far from their country and their homes away,
 If chance those simple, well-known, sounds they hear
 (Though scarcely music to a stranger's ear)
 Which on their native hills the milk-maid sings,
 (While the slant sun his lengthening shadow flings,)

Her wandering heifer homeward to recall
From the wild woodland to the sheltering stall,
What wonder that for these lov'd scenes they yearn,
And back, in sighs and tears, repentant turn ?

But this the least, *HELVETIA*, of thy praise !
That in thee Nature all her charms displays,
And smiling sits on her exalted throne,
Fair in eternal youth, majestic and alone !
For safe within the rampart of thy rocks
Wander the myriads of thy herds and flocks,
The generous vine, too, gladdens all thy vales ;
And sickness flies before thy mountain-gales :
And thine th' enlighten'd industry, that fills
With plenty every cottage on thy hills,
Whence, through the darkness of the busy night,
Gleams, star-like, many a taper's wakeful light ;
Thine, too, each Son of Science, whether born
To teach of other worlds, or this adorn :
Bold, in the search of knowledge, to explore
The mine's tremendous secrets, or to soar
E'en to the glacier's point, and, safely there,
With mortal lips, inhale " empyrean air ;"
And thine the lofty bard, the letter'd sage,
Whose glory shall be thine from age to age ;
In thee, too, Man is found, as man should be,
Active and brave, and innocent and free :
The last not least, for that secures the rest :
The willing slave deserves not to be blest ;
Nor merits more the tyrant, both debased,
And from the rank of man alike disgraced ;
Both reft of all that should control us here,
One without hope, the other without fear,

Torn all those sure, those subtle ties that bind
Man to his brother-man, and mind to mind.

Oh ! then, ye natives of this happy land !
Assembling all, around your altars stand :
There shall the Spirits of your fathers rise,
To hear ye vow the patriot-sacrifice
Of every feud that separates clan from clan,
And of your Union mars the heav'n-taught plan.
Swear, too, that none, who dare in arms to strive
For your best birthright, shall th' attempt survive,
For well ye know the fraud and force of those
(At once the unwise and the worst of foes)
Who thirst to enslave ye ; though the accursed deed,
No gain to them, would make ye " poor indeed."
Oh ! watch, from all your hills, with wary eye,
The smallest cloud, that darkens in the sky,
Drawn from your own, or from a foreign soil,
To blight the harvest of your fathers' toil :
Revere the sacred memory of the Dead,
Nor lose the liberty for which they bled ;
Fulfil the trust to your own children due,
And leave them all your sires bequeath'd to you.
For so, when gather'd to their ashes, long
Your names shall live in story and in song.
Nor are your hills the limits of your fame,
Wide as the world the gratitude you claim ;
All, in your freedom free, your cause shall bless,
Refuge of all whom prince or priest oppress.
Doom'd for his virtues or his faith to roam,
In you the injured exile finds a home ;*

* Alas ! this praise is no longer deserved.

Safe and revered, the Patriot and the Sage
Smile at the Monk's, or Tyrant's, harmless rage.

And yet, though fair the land, the people blest,
In thee, in thee, dear ENGLAND ! would I rest :
I love thee better still the more I roam :
Proud of thee as my country and my home :
Thou fear'st not foreign nor domestic foes,
Thy laws no haughty neighbour dares impose,
Safe in thy valiant sons, thy subject-sea,
Thou dost not ask permission to be free :
Nay ! had thy Spartan youth no wall of waves,
A world confederate could not make them slaves,
So early taught to think a freeman's life
Not worth preserving, vanquish'd in that strife.

But 'tis not now my theme to boast thy charms,
Thou land of wealth and virtue, arts and arms !
Thou art my choice, though changeful, though austere
Thy clime ; and oft in pain, and oft in fear,
My panting lip, and labouring breast, inhale
The winter lingering in thy vernal gale.

Henceforth (my skill forgot, my strength no more)
I quit life's stormy sea, and seek the shore ;
My only task the footsteps to pursue
(Far, far behind !) of those, the virtuous few,
Who serve, without reward, in Freedom's cause,
And hourly watch the sanctuary of her laws.
No more, oh London ! but when duty calls,
To breathe the cloud that hovers o'er thy walls,
To stem thy crowds, endure thy deafening noise,
Gaze at thy splendours, or repent thy joys.
From thee far off I turn my willing feet
To the lone quiet of my lov'd retreat :

To stray from field to field in careless ease,
And count the blossoms on the tardy trees ;
Climb the high down to meet the rising sun,
Or in my copse his mid-day fervour shun.
Oft as he sinks, accomplished Lock ! behind
Thy solemn groves, up thy steep lawn I wind
Unseen, unheard, to mark his crimson ray
Gleam through the gathering clouds, and fade away ;
Then, homeward turning, oft the past review ;
Learning from old faults to escape from new ;
Or call back joys long fled, that would not stay,
Slighted perhaps in youth's presumptuous day,
(Yet youth to age a lesson oft can give,
And teach its timorous wisdom how to live,)
Now dreaming though awake, I soar in air,
And build a thousand gorgeous castles there ;
Then drop into my cottage-home content :
The night's repose earn'd by the day well spent.
Still happier when by those my board is cheer'd
(Kindred or friends) whom love has long endear'd ;
Or should some honour'd guest, half smiling, deign
To trace the limits of my little reign,
Then proud of both, each varying scene I show ;
The impending cliff, the gulfy stream below ;
The box-clad hill, in whose unfading groves,
Fragrant and fair, the lingering traveller roves ;
The gray church-spire, the tree-embosom'd town ;
The clustering flocks that crowd the upland-down ;
The distant mountain with its far-seen tower,
Now a sad purple in the summer-shower,
Now smiling, as the air-born colours play,
And the Sun's course from dawn to dark betray :

The druid-grove, where many a reverend yew
Hides from his thirsty beam the noontide dew ;
The swelling steepes of Norbury's beech-crown'd heigh
Where lovely nature, tasteful art, unite
To lure the traveller's eye, and then detain,
Spell-bound, and loth to leave the fair domain.

Meanwhile I listen with attentive ear
To catch its magic accents, as they veer
From wit to wisdom ; his, upon whose tongue
The fate of his lov'd Ireland oft has hung ;
Or his, before whose philosophic eye
The mists, that cover man's best knowledge fly ;
Destin'd his country's glories to record,
And give her chiefs their last and best reward.
His, too, who sings so well in memory's praise
That she shall ne'er forget his deathless lays,
His, at whose bidding science, like the day,
Enlightens all with an impartial ray ;
Who, lavish of his intellectual store,
Scatters (best alms !) instruction to the poor ;
His ends, with sleepless energy, pursues,
And those the noblest ends that man can choose.
Or his, whom, in the senate, modest worth
Had raised to rank unknown to wealth or birth,
Or his (both mute in an untimely grave !*)
Wont to redress the wrong'd, protect the slave,
Arraign the greatest guilty ; or persuade
Stern law to sheathe her sanguinary blade.

With such to live the envied lot be mine,
Pleas'd for the few the many to resign :

* Added in 1819.

Blest in the esteem of such, and self-respect
 More precious still, how vain the world's neglect!
 How vain its honours! oft too dearly bought,
 And worth the having only when unsought.

Ah! "hopes too fondly nurs'd, too rudely crost."
 Even now I mourn for some for ever lost,
 Not only mine, but their sad country's boast.

Not long I weep, to follow I prepare,
 I would not be the last that heav'n shall spare;
 Still some are left me, long in friendship tried,
 Whose converse cheers me, and whose counsels guide.
 Lov'd, too, by those departed, and, in fame,
 In genius, equal—equal, not the same;
 With these I ask life's few last hours to spend;
 Then calmly meet, nor wish'd, nor fear'd, its end.

EPISTLE TO A VERY YOUNG LADY.

BADEN BADEN, 1821.

Behold, dear girl, at your request,
A letter to yourself address,
And written, as you wished, in rhyme,
And dated from a foreign clime.

For now, once more, abroad I roam
In search of what I leave at home,
Pleasure—which follow'd loves to fly,
But waited for, still hovers nigh.
And yet I go, and go alone :
Perhaps by penance to atone
For follies past, of ancient date,
Having committed none of late.

But, ah ! I see your well-known smile,
And hear you laughing too the while :
Though 'tis a gentle voice I hear,
That only jests, and cannot jeer.

No matter why—the sea I crost,
Not sick, though somewhat rudely tost :
And now am posting up the RHINE,
Fam'd for old castles and old wine ;
Thanks to my light calèche which steals
Onward on yet unbroken wheels ;
Though jolting, shaking my poor bones,
O'er the rough pavé's rattling stones,

Or grating gravel by the side,
 When leave by ruts is not denied.
 How one gets on 'tis hard to say,
 Still for the castle doom'd to stay;
 Some carrying hay, the others hired,
 They must be fed, too, and are tired;
 The small third horse (their right by law,)
 That will look back, and will not draw;
 The trace and bridle of old rope
 Sure soon to break, and balk your hope:
 In vain you cry "Well now we're gone,"
 The driver's off as soon as on;
 Still something in the tackle wrong;
 This is too short, and that too long.
 In vain you threaten, coax, or bribe
 This smoking, dozing, self-will'd tribe,
 Proud of the terrors of the whip,
 The huge mustachio on the lip,
 The high-cock'd hat, and tassell'd horn,
 They hear you—but they hear with scorn:
 And when to the town-gate you get
 Thinking to enter—"Hold"—"Not yet."
 A thousand questions you must answer,
 "Or to get in you have no chance, sir!"
 As—what you are, and what's your name,
 Whither you're going, whence you came;
 "Your passport, sir"—Heav'ns! that's mislaid,
 Yourself you absolve, your man upbraid,
 "Of sense he surely is bereft,"
 You wonder "where it can be left,"
 Then search and search, and (humbled) find it,
 Just in the very place assign'd it.

Fam'd **HEIDELBERG** I reach at last,
Repaid for toil, and dangers, past:
The prying custom-house at **DOVER** :
The long, or stormy passage over,
The favourite packet t'other side,
And that one sails in losing tide ;
The capering boat that comes from **CALAIS**
To wet you through and spoil your valise :
Then through the surf the ride astraddle,
A Frenchman's shoulders for your saddle.

But thanks to **WATT**, the gale may blow,
The restless tide may ebb or flow,
Self-mov'd the fire-fraught vessel flies,
Heedless of adverse seas and skies.

But, lo ! what sudden visions rise
Before my charm'd, my dazzled eyes !
What awful ruins, high in air,
The subject mountains proudly bear !
Of gothic kings the ancient home,
The unconquer'd foes of baffled **ROME**,
And now believ'd their dwelling-place,
Though lost by their degenerate race ;
For oft, with solemn, wild affright,
Unearthly sounds, at dead of night,
Are heard along the mouldering walls
Of these unroof'd, deserted, halls ;
While armed statues lie around,
Prostrate and humbled, on the ground !

With what delight these paths I tread,
And trace the footsteps of the dead !
The terraces and gardens fair !
Where many a flower still scents the air,

Once throng'd by those who grac'd the court ;
By dames, and peers, of lofty port ;
Still to the way-worn pilgrim dear :
The lovelorn bard still lingers here,
And listens to the funeral cry
Of night-birds, wailing as they fly. ,
And still, at eve, each holy-day
Here crowd the pensive and the gay ;
These bowery steeps ascending slow
From the tower'd city, far below.
Yet wherefore climb the arduous height ?
And quit that valley of delight ?
Beside yon rocky mountain-stream
Well may the youthful poet dream,
The traveller pause, the idler stray,
Unconscious of the waning day,
And mark the proud sail bending low
Beneath the humble arch to flow ;
The jointed raft, now, snake-like, glide,
Now dart impetuous down the tide :
The unwieldly barge, o'erladen, creep,
Scarce floating on the murmuring deep :
In each calm bay reflected far
The crimson west, the unquench'd star :
Or on the hills the cottage-light
Appear, and vanish from the sight :
Then, home returning, seek again
The cheerful haunts of busy men.

Could Britain (heav'n forbid it!) barter
For aught on earth, her freedom's charter,
Or change, through wantonness or fear,
Those laws that she should most revere,

Self-banish'd I could be content
Here, with a few, to pitch my tent,
Here end my days, and bless my lot,
Forget the past, and be forgot.

Sweet BADEN too, that seat of pleasure!
Where monarchs spend their hard-earn'd leisure,
And (more attractive guests) the fair,
Whose smiles a crowd of suitors share;
How shall my verse, so rude, so weak,
Presume thy countless charms to speak?
Thy groves and glens, thy lawns and hills;
The virtues of thy fuming rills:
Thy castled heights, thy gay chateau,
Its caverns, dark and deep below:
The bright fantastic spires that crown
The steeps of thy aspiring town:
Thy shelter'd paths, with many a seat,
Where the shy strangers fear to meet,
And scarcely dare each other note,
Though neighbours, at the table d'hôte,
The morning walk, the ride by day,
At night the bath, the ball, the play.

Yet here, ev'n here, is wanting still
Somewhat the craving heart to fill.
Of those I love if one were here,
One only, my lone steps to cheer,
Wert thou but leaning on my arm,
All, all would more than doubly charm:
The groves in brighter hues would glow,
The streams in sweeter murmurs flow.
Still more were she our walks to share,
Who, with a more than mother's care,

Thy tender years from harm protects,
Thy manners forms, thy mind directs ;
Or he, so near in blood allied,
Once my companion, now my guide ;
Or others, easily divin'd,
To me so dear, to me so kind.

Farewell ! I leave ye with regret,
Ye scenes that I may ne'er forget !
Far wilder those to which I go,
Mountains, and vales of summer-snow :
Now too, with compliments to friends,
This long and dull epistle ends ;
For I am tired, and so are you,
Adieu, my dearest ward, adieu !

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

INSPRUCK, 1821.

To thee, my old, my valued friend,
Health from the TYROL hills I send.
Oh ! that I *had* the power to grant
The only blessing thou canst want,
Health ! of Heav'n's gifts almost the best,
Without it what are all the rest ?

Come quit with me the world of care,
And breathe this salutary air.
That world together we began ;
Its toilsome race together ran ;
Together let us seek repose,
And husband life, so near its close :
Fanning the embers of that fire,
Which else might unawares expire.
But no !—'tis still thy praise to find
The joys that suit thy vigorous mind
In scenes of energy, not ease,
(The joys that on reflection please,)
From a lov'd wife and children round :
Of all delights the sweetest found !
From affluence and from honour gain'd
By arduous duties well-sustain'd ;
From gratitude for harms repress,
For rights maintain'd, and wrongs redrest.

But yet, my friend, there is a time
(Believe the truth though told in rhyme)
When life should not be spent too fast,
But be economis'd to last.

Of time (so short at best!) aware
How little I can have to spare,
All cares, save duties, I decline,
And ev'n ambition now resign.
But little miss'd I freely roam,
Leaving a solitary home:
Yet oft of those that most I prize
The well-known forms around me rise;
Still when my evening-walk is o'er,
My inn regain'd, and closed my door,
My winged thoughts delight to stray
O'er land and sea, far, far away;
Some face I see, some voice I hear,
By absence render'd doubly dear,
And in sweet visions pass the night,
Chas'd only by the unwelcom'd light.

The day returns: yet still I seem,
Though broad awake, as much to dream:
So strange the sights that then appear,
So strange the accents that I hear.

Behold the stork ascend to perch
On the green spire of yon tall church!
Which, like each house, is storied o'er
With tales of legendary lore:
The dragon vanquished by the knight:
The monk that fiends in vain would fright;
Who prays, though fires around him rise,
To her that beckons from the skies:

The giant-form of aspect mild,
That on his shoulder bears a child,
And walks the water as 'twere land,
Wielding an oak-tree in his hand;
The saint that bears the labourer's yoke
And with the beggar shares his cloak,
Or he, whose cup has power to drown
The flames, that threat th' affrighted town.

But see the *living* motley mass!
The dress uncouth that marks each class;
The bare-foot son, the bare-kneed sire,
The hat, now tapering like the spire,
Now broader than a broad umbrella,
Black, white and blue, pea-green or yellow.
The women too—but that's a task,
That well a hundred tongues might ask,
That well a hundred tongues might tire,
So strange, so various, their attire.

Contrasted thus in outward show,
Their minds few shades of difference know;
Priest-ridden, ignorant, unrefin'd,
But just, and brave, and not unkind;
Of each the employment, every day,
To eat and drink and smoke and pray:
At every hour, in every street,
The tinkling bell and host you meet:
At every turn the traveller sees
Crosses almost as thick as trees;
And not a little scorn it rouses
To note more chapels built than houses;
Monks, Friars too, black, white, grey or brown,
With cord, and cowl, and shaven-crown,

With surplice, tunic, cloak or vest,
 Lazy and harmless at the best.

Ill fated man ! whose doom is such
 That still too little, or too much,
 Is taught his unsuspecting youth,
 By those who scorn, or fear, the truth.

Better, far better, of the two,
 To hold each tale devoutly true
 That priests have feign'd, or beldames old
 Have taught, and trembled as they told ;
 Than in suspense be tost about
 From faith to faith, from doubt to doubt,
 Or think, if it deserve that name,
 That all from chance, from nothing, came.

Man in foul air may draw his breath,
 Exhaust it, and he sinks in death.
 For life he needs some atmosphere,
 For health one uncorrupt and clear.

Yet worse, far worse, th' accursed creed
 That those who err, or doubt, should bleed,
 Or suffer torture, loss, or shame,
 Because their faith is not the same,
 As Pope, or Priest, or Presbyter,
 Boasting they can, or do not err,
 Have dared in folly, or in fraud,
 As Heav'n's decree, to send abroad,
 Blaspheming, wronging, (impious plan !)
 Their maker, God ; their brother, man.

Hark ! hear ye not that cry so dread ?
 The living mourning for the dead—
 And see ye not yon sight of woe ?
 The dying made a public show.

That rolling beat, that thrilling blast,
Proclaim that one now breathes his last:
The bloody wheel, the flaming stake,
Failing his dauntless heart to shake,
The irrevocable word was giv'n,
That sends a soul to hell, or heav'n.

Oh say, ye mourners, what the deeds,
Unnatural, foul, for which he bleeds?
Just Heav'n! ye know not—all ye know
That in yon dungeon, dark, and low,
He groan'd in chains for many a year,
Unheard his sigh, unseen his tear,
And that he now lies breathless here.
The holy office knows the rest,
Their secrets never are confest:
Haply some dogma he denied,
To check some vile abuse he tried;
He might be evil, might be just,
But all is darkness, and distrust.

Not thus in ENGLAND, no! thank God!
There bigots wield a broken rod,
Though smiting with an iron-hand
Yon verdant isle's devoted land.

Brought home thus by an episode
I'll there take up a short abode:
Or, to speak plainly, I think best
To give myself, and you, some rest:
Not without hope that this may find you
At * *, business left behind you,
Reclin'd beneath that ancient yew
Whence most the landscape charms the view,
Or strolling o'er the busy farm,

With Jane or Sarah on your arm:
 But they, a side-saddle for their seat,
 Scamper on other people's feet,
 Up fam'd BOXHILL, or MICKLEHAM-down,
 Or to buy pins in DORKING-town.

Perchance you hear what Jane relates
 Of fair Helvetia's happy states;
 Or of gay PARIS does she speak?
 That has no Sunday in her week,
 So greedy both of gain and pleasure,
 Breaking for both that day of leisure.
 Or if the sun, by some rare chance,
 Should through the clouds a moment glance,
 Then, with your lady by your side,
 Along the sheltering copse you glide,
 Or now, at eve, you sit in door,
 And turn some classic author o'er;
 One haply of the illustrious dead,
 Whom, young, together oft we read.
 But now, sometimes, to own the truth,
 It is not as it was, in youth:
 When after dinner one applies,
 The glimmering letters tease the eyes,
 The book too is so apt to fall!
 And then, methinks, 'tis time to call,
 As you do now, "John! bring the light,
 I'll go to bed"—Good night! good night!

EPISTLE TO A BROTHER.

MEX, 1821.

Oh ! that one friendly cloud would rise,
To mitigate these burning skies !
Or that in some sequester'd bay
Floating upon the wave I lay ;
While o'er my head the branches play'd
Of some vast oak, a sun-proof shade !
And gentle showers fell pattering round ;
Beneath the leaves I'd bless the sound.

My mind relax'd, my body too
Thaws and " resolves itself into a dew !"
While yet I'm visible I'll run,
From ITALY's inclement sun ;
For Summer scorches hill and vale,
Dries up the streams, and taints the gale :
Not till yon beaming orb declines,
Thridding the last autumnal signs,
And in the thirsty river-bed
The clouds of stifling dust are laid,
Yon barrier-alps to reascend,
And tow'ards the imperial city bend.

As through the glittering peaks I go,
Reviv'd I tread the bracing snow :
Each little patch of pasture green,
Each eddying gust, tho' biting keen,

The very mists that curling rise
 And blend the mountains with the skies,
 My pulses calm, my strength restore,
 And bid me breathe and move once more,
 Ne'er to lament, in prose or rhyme,
 The rigours of our northern clime.
 What though, now gentle, now severe,
 From point to point the breezes veer,
 And many a cloud the heavens obscure:
 From pestilence, from plague secure,
 Still nerv'd to enjoy, and broad awake,
 Our lot, so scorn'd, content we take,
 Nor envy those their heat and light
 Who sleep at noon as well as night.

'Twas thus the rude epistle ran,
 Which on the *ARMO* I began:
 Now happy at your favourite *BEX*,
 And *cool*, far other feelings sway.
 Here grateful memory fain would praise
 Fair *ITALY* in living lays:
 But this demands a loftier strain,
 And I must seek her vales again;
 Again peruse her storied walls
 In solemn temples, sumptuous halls,
 Where all the rival arts conspire
 To charm, to touch, and to inspire.

Ah! hapless land where prince and priest,
 And stranger-tyrants, ("last not least,")
 Thy rights deny, thy arms deride,
 And, in the fulness of their pride,
 Or jealous of thy former fame,
 Would rob thee of thy very name.

Oh ! when will the avenger rise ?
 Touch'd by his country's afflictions.
 (Not dead, but such as those can bear
 To whom their country still is dear)
 And, gathering round him host on host,
 From the Alps to far CATALUNNA'S coast,
 Lay, by one bold resistless blow,
 Never to rise, the oppressor low ?

The avenger God, behold once more
 Fashions thy arms and arms restore !
 But, ere that hour of bliss return,
 Thy humbled, scatter'd sons must earn,
 Must bravely earn their liberty ;
 First be victorious, then be free !
 'Tis slandering men their courage more,
 Which to justice is to deserve :
 Old wounds they must forget, forgive,
 And as our mighty people live,
 'Till shall the world allow their claim
 'Tis more than ev'n their ancient fame.

Nit yet!—will holds the vile intrigue,
 Self-mur'd, in fraud, THE HOLY LEAST !
 No light-fully, but far worse,
 Of heav'n the mockery, earth the curse :
 For though the scepter'd robbers scorn
 Such his misfortune, yet “ they’ve sworn ”—
 “ They ” have an oath in heav’n,” and most
 (thou men!) be impious and unjust.

Then, by the grateful world confest,
 There was a refuge for the oppress’d.
 But now, in vain the patriot flies
 From his lov'd home, and native skies ;

In vain of broken faith complains,
Dragg'd back to death, or, worse, to chains.
Great as thou art, my country, thou
Canst scarce protect the stranger now !
In secret fetter'd to their cause,
The despots dictate ev'n thy laws.*
But, thanks to heav'n ! there is a land
Above their influence, or command,
Virtuous their maxims to despise,
And strong their violence to chastise.
Haste ! weigh the anchor, spread the sail
Wide to the welcome eastern gale :
Still, still the setting sun pursue ;
Driv'n from the old world seek the new :
There fear no more the exile knows,
But from his hunters finds repose,
His own, his country's wrongs proclaims,
And safe, the baffled tyrant shames.

Yet blame not this just people still,
It is their weakness, not their will,
That yields consent to those that hate,
And fain would crush each unking'd state.
O'er-look this blemish, and once more
The wonders of this land explore :
Beheld with rapture, left with pain,
Yet felt more deeply seen again,
Than when at first, with hurried pace,
Surpris'd, subdued, these scenes we trace.
To loftier heights the hills aspire ;
In deeper gloom the glens retire ;

* The nation has resumed its ancient generosity and independence, 1824.

With sweeter sounds the waters flow,
More brightly their reflections glow.

For who can, self-possess, behold
The visions these wild vales unfold ?
The mountains of eternal snow ?
The abyss of rifted ice below ?
The bridge that springs from rock to rock,
And trembles to the torrent's shock ?
The fearful pass, whose cliffs between
A line of sky is scarcely seen ?
The liquid crystal of the rill
That gushes from the rocky hill ?
The inland sea, now calm in sleep,
Now, waken'd, an o'erwhelming deep ?

Here first, long since, at your request,
I came, and found delight and rest ;
And now with joy my o'er-travell'd feet
Return to this belov'd retreat :
Where, on the loud tumultuous Rhone,
From dawn to dark I muse alone ;
Or listen to the vesper-bell
Echoing through many a craggy dell :
Or, as the soft green lawn I tread,
While chestnuts flower above my head,
The far-off LEMAN LAKE descry,
Fair mirror of the changeful sky !
Now silvery-smooth, now sparkling gold :
Or, o'er the humbler Alps, behold
Those glowing peaks that long detain
The sun's last rays, tho' dark the plain,
Then, pale and wan in the cold night-air,
Look like the ghosts of what they were :

Or mark with awe the mouldering towers,
That tell of long-departed hours;
Or cliffs that guard the little gate;
Frail barrier between state and state !

More charm'd from hour to hour—and yet
With far more pleasure than regret,
Homeward at length my steps I turn ;
My eyes for other objects yearn ;
The fire-side circle, small and dear,
Narrowing, ah narrowing every year !
The chosen, or the neighbour-friend,
The servant pleas'd and proud to attend ;
The well-known door, and even the bed,
On which, so oft reclin'd, my head
Sweet rest has found, or vainly sought
Through the long night of troubled thought.

How slowly, eager to arrive,
I think the dull postilions drive !
The leagues seem longer, and the pavé
Is surely grown more rough and heavy :
Yet haply 'tis in vain I haste,
Doom'd, as before, whole days to waste
Pacing till night on Calais-pier,
Invoking winds that will not hear ;
While not a packet dares to sail,
Aw'd by the equinoctial gale ;
Still looking o'er to that white shore
Where I so long to tread once more.
E'en now in thought I spring to land,
And grasp o'erjoy'd a brother's hand.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND AT HIS VILLA.

CHAMPNEY, 1823.

At length you fly from smoke and noise
 To wholesome air, and tranquil joys,
 From routs and ball, from park and play,
 (Day turn'd to night, and night to day.)
 To cheerful rides at morning-hours,
 And evening-walks 'mid shrubs and flowers,
 Where broad, and bright, the stately Thames
 From the charm'd guest due homage claims;
 As o'er its wave the white sail glides,
 Or the swift steam-boat steers the tides.
 But, ah! the town diffuses far
 Its gloomy atmosphere of care;
 The murmur of its strife assails
 The peace of each surrounding vale:
 O'er many a mile must toil the feet
 That seek an undisturb'd retreat:
 Its pride and vanity are wont
 The meek and humble to affront,
 And, though forbidden to oppress,
 To make them think their little less.
 But you, who all its stores command,
 Yet its temptations can withstand:
 Its pleasures quit without regret,
 And quickly all its cares forget.

More timorous I for safety run,
And wisely the rough conflict shun.
Once more amid th' eternal snows
The frozen Alps around me close,
Though flames the summer-sun on high,
Just seen athwart the narrow sky ;
The beam of fire, the whelming rain,
Beat on these ice-built rocks in vain :
For reconciled the seasons here
Dance hand in hand throughout the year.
In this disorder, these extremes,
As if in sport wild nature seems
To scorn restraint, and break all laws ;
Alarm'd we fly to her great cause,
And, awed though tranquillised, we hail
The goodness that can never fail
Of Him, who all these wonders plann'd,
And in whose presence *here* we stand,
Who gave us (grateful let us kneel!)
Eyes to discern, and hearts to feel.
Let then th' aerial spire arise,
And tower on tower invade the skies ;
On clustering shafts the proud dome rise ;
With gems one gold the walls emblaze ;
Bid art with truth wage generous strife,
And soften marble into life :
Then consecrate, in pomp, the pile,
While wondering angels gaze and smile ;
Here are his temples, *here* his court !
Hither the pilgrim should resort ;
Not cross the desert's burning sands
To bow at altars built by hands,

Nor to LORETTO'S shrine repair,
Though spirits bore it through the air.
Nurs'd in these scenes sublime, severe,
The wild, but pious mountaineer
Learns their great Author to revere :
Gentle, though ever prone to dare,
And, when the need is, firm to bear,
'Tis his to extort by patient toil
His hard fare from a churlish soil :
Through pathless hills to guide, and save
The wanderer from a sudden grave.
Or, on his pike-staff bounding high,
From rock to rock, o'er torrents fly :
Or, cowering, on his knees to creep
Along the ridge of some tall steep,
Chasing the Chamois—"dreadful calling ;"
Ever 'mid sights and sounds appalling ;
Above! the avalanche!—below!
The crevasse in the treacherous snow!
Where death lurks, waiting for his prey,
Watching the hunter on his way.
The path breaks down—Behold he falls!
In vain to climb the glassy walls
He strives, and strives:—he shouts in vain,
Far far from all the haunts of men ;
Deep in the narrow chasm he lies,
No more to see the cheerful skies ;
Not one of all his soul holds dear
To close his eyes, or dress his bier :
Unknown his burial-place, though guess'd,
Alas ! too truly, all the rest :

They search, but find not. He must lie
 For ever hid from human eye.
 Yet bites not there the insulting worm,
 Even Time respects his manly form :
 He still shall sleep, unchang'd, tho' lost,
 Embalm'd in everlasting frost.

Alive that manly form could please,
 Though clad in undy'd robe of frieze.
 Heav'ns ! how unlike the half-sex'd beau,
 Screw'd in new stays for Rotten-row !
 With tiny coat, but huge cravat,
 Rings, seals, and glasses, and "all that !"
 Enough—farewell ! with higher matter
 'Tis wrong to blend truth so like satire.

EPISTLE TO SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

ROME, 1823.

Lur'd by thy verse, behold once more
Thy friend fair ITALY explore!
And though, by suffering taught, I shun
Her unrelenting summer-sun,
Yet now I woo his beams, to cheer
The gloom of an expiring year:
Where, 'mid the ruins round her spread,
ROME lifts on high her mitred head,
Once circled by the imperial crown,
To which a subject-world bow'd down.

Now weak tho' reverend, in decay
She scarcely claims her ancient sway;
But begs a little homage, paid
Less to the living than the dead,
Whose honour'd tombs, now mouldering round,
Can consecrate the very ground.

Palace and dome scarce heeded rise,
More sees the memory than the eyes.
Yet here (the work of modern hands)
In state, the noblest temple stands,
That to his great Creator's praise
The piety of man could raise:
Here, too, like breathing nature warm,
Dwells many a bright, angelic form,

Hewn from the rock by matchless skill,
Once gods, and almost worshipp'd still!
And here the pencil's magic hues
Their spells along the walls diffuse,
Calling saints, heroes, from the grave,
Again to teach, again to save.

Th' eternal city as I trace
The present to the past gives place:
The spirits of the dead appear,
And sounds divine transport my ear;
I listen, heedless of the throng,
To TULLY's speech, or MARO's song.
Now, winding through the sculptur'd arch,
Behold the long triumphal march:
Or mark the warrior-horseman leap
Fearlessly down the yawning deep;
Or him, who, singly, dares oppose
(Striding the bridge) a host of foes.
Now, shuddering, the stern consul see
His rebel sons to death decree;
Or, in the senate, hail the blow,
That lays the great usurper low.
But who, on thrones, in robes of state
Silently sit, and smile at fate?
The conscript-sires—though fierce and rude,
The conqueror is himself subdued,
Drops the red spear, and bends the knee,
Esteeming each a Deity!

Oh! how in latter life it cheers
To triumph o'er the power of years!
Calm'd, not exhausted, to perceive
That we can feel, admire, believe

E'en to the last, as in our prime,
Spite of the malice of old Time.
Not more our joy, than pride, to know
That the chill'd blood again can glow ;
That Fancy still has wings to soar
High as she oft was wont before :
And Hope still listens to her song,
As erst when credulous and young :
That there are vales where smiling Spring
Is lovelier than the poets sing ;
And Nature's bright realities
Transcend what painting can devise :
Where May can trust, in field and bower,
Her blossoms to the morning-hour,
Nor dreads the venomous east should breathe,
To blight the flow'rets in her wreath ;
Where scarcely swells a bud in vain
Of blushing fruit, or golden grain.
Alas ! fair land ! that thy rich dower
Should ever be the prize of power,
Yielded to Vandal, Moor, or Gaul,
Or bigot-sloth, far worse than all !
Oh grief ! that blessings too profuse
Should turn to curses by th' abuse ;
That virtue, freedom, still must fly
For shelter to a frozen sky !

Like gold, all good requires alloy,
We learn by suffering to enjoy.

Once thy possessors, great in arms,
Defended, and deserv'd thy charms,
Well taught (alas ! in times gone by)
Bravely to conquer, or to die.

Then the rude Hun rough welcome found,
 And with his bones manur'd the ground,
 Though now his haughty banner waves
 High o'er his vanquish'd fathers' graves.
 Now must thy humbled sons regret,
 The present bear, the past forget,
 Blush when they hear their fathers' fame,
 And hide in smiles their grief and shame;
 Not long—soon shall the smouldering fire
 Explode in thunder, or expire;
 Oh! not the last!—in vain they dare
 (The crown'd conspirators) to share
 The earth between them, as their prey
 Willing to suffer and obey.
 As soon shall they forbid the sun,
 Save at their will, his course to run,
 Arrest the ocean-tides, or bind
 The pinions of the wandering wind.

What though of much the land's bereft,
 Enough to regain *all* is left!
 Art, science, letters, still survive
 The liberty that bade them thrive:
 And many a poet of high name
 Upholds his country's former fame.
 Thy latest theme; well chos'n by thee
 The bard inspir'd by memory!
 And greatly shall thy lasting lay
 Her hospitality o'erpay:
 Long, long the rival to remain
 Ev'n of her noblest native strain.

EPISTLE TO THE LORD HOLLAND.

WINDERMERE, 1829.

"Feros mollite colendo."

GEOR. II. 36.

Ask not what charms there are in scenes like these,
Wild hills, and clamorous brooks, and inland-seas!
In the sweet face of nature to delight
Will not in thee surprise or scorn excite.

But 'tis not only mountain, lake and stream,
(Though here as fair as a young poet's dream)
No! here a generous peasantry we find,
Of graceful form and cultivated mind:
Here, too, a gentry that may well preside
O'er men thus gifted and not void of pride.
To them the earth her annual tribute yields
As lords, not tenants, of their native fields:
Yet to their sons the sires bequeathed far more
Than land, herd, flock, and heaps of glittering ore:
In every village, schools, though rude, they rear'd;
It was not want but ignorance they fear'd;
And of their little largely gave to ensure
Their children's children should be taught tho' poor.

Blest be their memory! what is man untaught?
Unfit alike for action, or for thought;
Selfish and wretched, ignorant and unjust;
And now by hunger goaded, now by lust:

Fraudful not wise, revengeful but not brave,
Savage a tyrant, civilised a slave:
Much like the brutes that groan beneath his sway,
A beast of burthen, or a beast of prey.

Rare though the plant may be and kind the soil,
The fruit is worthless unimproved by toil:
But tended, train'd through sunshine, gust and shower,
The weed's transformed into a radiant flower.

Hard, hard indeed is woman's ceaseless task!
E'en from the cradle all her cares we ask:
Cares that a mother only can bestow;
A task that only love will undergo!
All must be learnt and most 'tis hers to teach;
The foot to step, the lip to move in speech.
See! now disdainful of her proffer'd hand,
The ambitious boy essays, in vain, to stand!
And, hark! the little mimic lisps her name,
Vain of success, but failing tinged with shame!
With thoughts and feelings, heart and mind, she sows,
And plucks each weed that still, unbidden, blows.
Beyond this world too she extends her care,
And on her knee unites his hands in prayer.

Soon stronger, bolder, from her arms he flies,
Proud to alarm her fears and to despise;
Now at his father's heels, where'er he strays,
He learns his sayings and affects his ways:
Then comes the school, the college, rivals, friends,
And but with life man's education ends.

All must conspire—yet all conspire in vain,
Unless the state be just, the church humane:
'Tis from the cherish'd faith and dreaded law
That men their maxims learn, their motives draw.

Govern'd by fraud or force a **PEOPLE** must
 Be, or become, unfeeling and unjust.
 What can avail the nursery or the school,
 Should priests misguide or magistrates misrule?
 To whom can helpless youth, perplex'd, repair,
 Should precept and example both ensnare?
 Setting their busiest hopes and fears at strife
 With the pure lessons of their early life.
 Can they esteem their good old teachers wise,
 Whom thus the learned and the great despise?
 Or love their God and neighbours as they ought,
 Should falsehood as the truth from heav'n be taught?
 If endless bliss be promised as the meed
 Of bigot-zeal, or a presumptuous creed?
 And all the terrors of a future world
 Against the best men found in this be hurl'd?
 But, lo! the clouds disperse, the horizon clears!
 The sun of science thro' the mist appears;
 Pierc'd by its beams the brood obscene of night,
 With shrieks and murmurs fly the hated light!
 Long since from this blest isle the foulest fled,
 A loathsome band, by superstition led:
 And the scar'd demons of the lagging rear
 Rise on the wing, soon, soon to disappear.
 Knowledge of old in one deep current stream'd,
 While on its banks the narrow harvest teem'd:
 All else a thirsty waste of shifting sand,
 Or curs'd by weeds that chok'd th' uncultur'd land.
 But now fresh rills break out on every side,
 Diffusing health and pleasure as they glide,
 Flowing thro' town and city, village, farm,
 And lending each a blessing and a charm.

The prophecy's fulfill'd, the poor are taught;
Home to each door the precious gift is brought,
Truth, to exalt and purify the mind,
For, where truth comes virtue's not far behind.

Distrustful are the ignorant, fierce, self-will'd,
Fickle, yet fix'd their judgments ne'er to yield,
Seditious, servile, rash, yet wanting nerve,
Easy to dupe, but very hard to serve.

Not thus th' instructed, for though, haply, proud
(When self-compar'd to the benighted crowd)
Yet have they ears to learn and eyes to see
Their duty, dealt with as men ought to be.

Rarely, if ever, is good given to man
Unmix'd with evil, such is Heav'n's high plan !
Yet can there still remain one generous doubt
Whether a People with sense, or without,
Is happier, better, less disposed to err,
Or which an honest statesman must prefer ?

Oh ! 'tis a pleasant dream (if dream it be)
Of man the brightening prospects to foresee :
Far more of Nature shall he daily know ;
Far mightier o'er her powers his mastery grow.
How many evils shall become more light !
How many more, perhaps, be banish'd quite !
How many comforts added to the store
That bounteous Providence had given before !
Not to the selfish, indolent and blind,
Who trust whate'er they wish to beg, or find,
But only to the wise, who can discern
That we are born our happiness to earn.

'Tis well that most are for their bread, each day,
Destin'd to toil, as well as taught to pray :

And all, of every rank, who would enjoy,
Must both their body and their mind employ.

Ye who find nought to love or to admire,
Beg, beg of niggard Nature a desire.

Nothing is had for nothing, all is sold,
Not to the wealthy only for their gold ;
By strenuous action and by patient thought,
All our best blessings ever must be bought.

Man seldom fails to o'ertake what he pursues,
But 'tis most rare that object well to choose.
Could thine be wealth, wake early and watch late,
Or, scorning dross, wouldst thou be still more great ?
The world's reproaches and thy own despise,
Be servile to rule others, creep to rise ;
Or wouldst thou fame ? court science or the muse,
An ardent lover neither can refuse :
Be oftener heard in senates, now to still,
Now stir, their charmed passions at thy will.
To be renown'd, some health and life expose,
Cross Afric's sand, or pierce the polar snows,
Or in the field, the bravest of the brave,
For glory seek, and find it—in the grave.

Thy hopes, I know, have a far loftier aim
Than riches, rank, vain learning, or a name :
Of love, true honour, happiness, the price
Is fixed, and must be given—Self-sacrifice.
This, through thy life, has cheerfully been paid,
And the rich recompense as freely made.
'Tis thine the same judgment to have shown
Of thy lov'd country's welfare and thy own.
Still has it been thy fate—thy choice—to oppose
Power and corruption, formidable foes !

And, ah ! how few the victories thou hast won !
 Yet wilt thou deem thyself o'erpaid by one.*
 The last, the most desir'd, a victory !
 Long due to him, who still survives in thee.

Oh ! could even now his generous spirit feel
 For justice, freedom, but its ancient zeal,
 Think with what heart-felt joy he must have view'd
 Evils that foil'd even him, by thee subdued.
 One conflict more,† and soon shall all be free,
 All, all, whate'er their Creed may chance to be.

* Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

† Emancipation of the Catholics.

EPIITAPH ON MR. HENDERSON.*

Born to delight at once and mend the age,
 Life to adorn, and dignify the stage,
 No more, oh HENDERSON ! thy magic art
 Shall wake at will each passion of the heart ;
 No more thy ardour fire, thy humour cheer,
 Nor at thy bidding start the obedient tear !
 No more shall crowds entranc'd, scarce breathing, see
 The dreams of Shakspeare realis'd by thee.
 Yet, were this all, this loss thy friends might bear,
 And ev'n with pride the general sorrow share ;
 But can they hope again, in one, to find
 Thy sense and genius, wit and worth, combin'd !
 Where shall thy widow'd wife, thy orphan child,
 Meet love so warm, authority so mild ?
 Alas ! thy fame shall still renew their grief :
 And Time itself to them refuse relief.

* Buried in Westminster Abbey. 3d December, 1735.

THE ROSE.

POET.

Say, lovely Rose, so fragrant and so fair!
Why art thou doom'd these rugged thorns to bear?
None sure would steal thee from thy native bower,
Though smooth thy stem, and silken as thy flower.

ROSE.

Once was I a poor weed, a worthless briar;
Till He, who tun'd thy voice, and strung thy lyre,
Bade me these soft and blushing leaves to bear,
And scatter perfume to the summer-air.
For, as she fled whose love he long had sought,
Her fluttering garments in my branches caught,
And she was won to listen to his vows
When, lo! these blooms, these odours deck'd my boughs!

POET.

Blest omen, hail! one opening bud I'll bear
To grace the obdurate bosom of my fair:
Haply he might to thy sweet breath impart
A subtle virtue to subdue the heart—
If such thy power I can be grateful too;
And thy entrancing scent, thy vermeil hue,
And this thy story, they shall live in verse,
And none henceforth thy guard of thorns asperse.

TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

There was an ancient sage, I'm told,
Who held that "man should weep,"
The doctrine's sour as well as old,
Not good enough to keep.

But, for the honour of those times,
It must be own'd, another
Maintain'd the tenet of these rhymes,
And scorn'd his whining brother.

That must be *true* philosophy
Which bids us smile at Care,
Since, whether mortals laugh or cry,
What happens they must bear.

Is there in sighs and tears a power
To soften stubborn Fate ?
Or add one unpredestin'd hour
To our appointed date ?

The turnpike-road to happiness
Through misery leads, no doubt !
Though somewhat rough, you must confess,
And rather round about.

There is a path more smooth and near,
Trust me, for I have tried ;

I did not ask my way of Fear,
Hope is a better guide.

Companion gay! that ever leads
Through verdure and through flowers,
And talks, whene'er the tempest breeds,
Of sunshine after showers.

Yet dwell not with her, though she toy,
And promise fair, and woo,
But win and wed her sister, Joy,
Still lovelier, and more true.

Youth, like a morning vision, flies:
Waking we sigh, in vain,
To close once more our aching eyes,
And dream it o'er again.

Ah! still, ye dear illusions, stay!
Still let me think ye true:
All the poor certainties of life
I'll gladly change for you.

Fold, Fancy, fold thy busy wing!
Sleep, troubled Memory, sleep!
Why should one fly our cares to bring?
The other wake to weep?

Our youth seem'd short because so sweet,
Then why should we repine?
Because we did our breakfast eat,
Must we refuse to dine?

Why should we look before, behind,
Unless the present shines ?
Draw up the window ! open the blind !
Whichever the next minute.

The future is beyond our power.
The past we should forget :
We can't afford the present hour
Should run away in debt.

'Tis well we yesterday thought so.
Aware it could not stay :
To-morrow may not come, you know,
We'll therefore live to-day.

Let not the good, ill-taught, despise
These maxims as too gay :
True pleasure in well-doing lies ;
'Tis worse than folly to delay.

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